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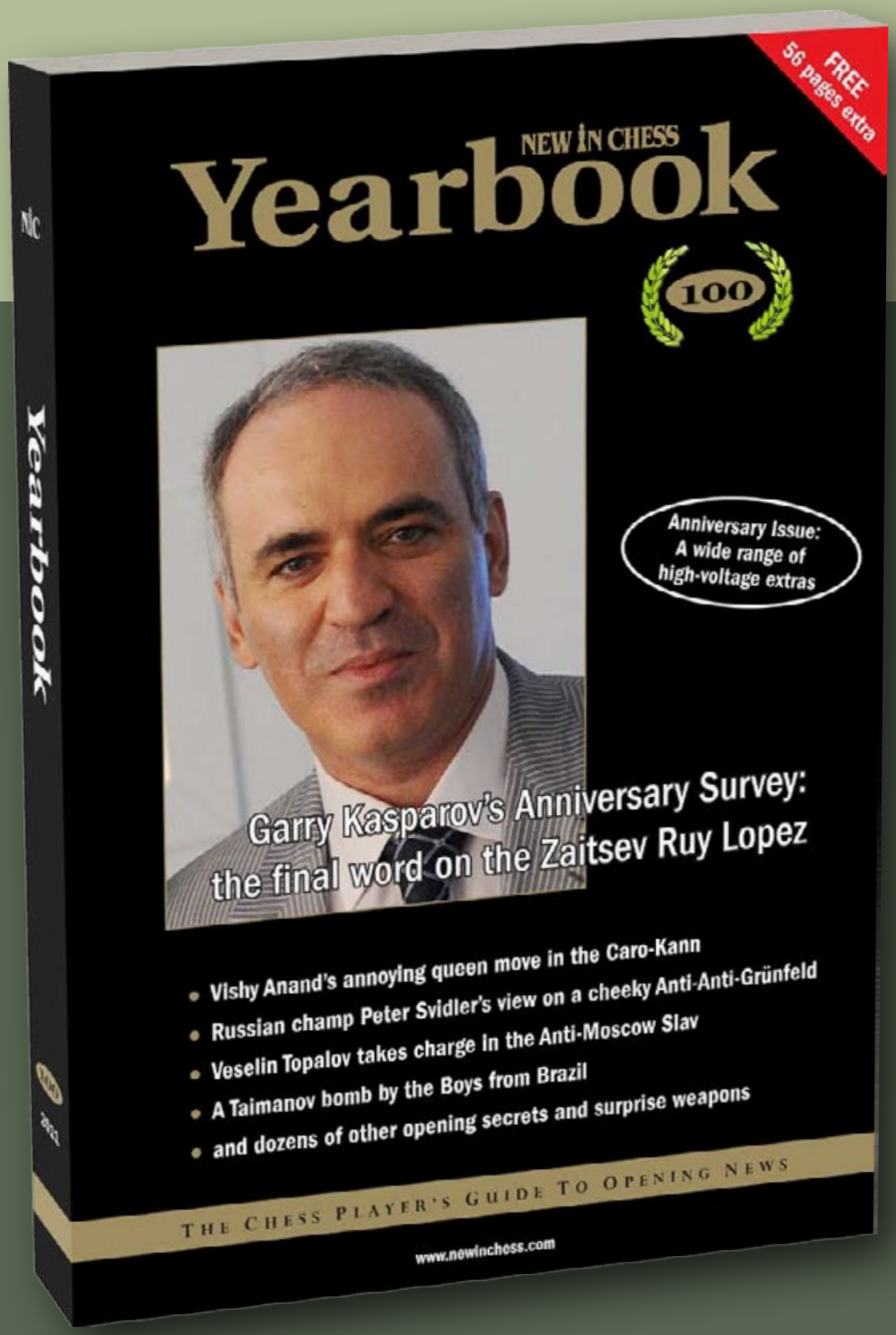
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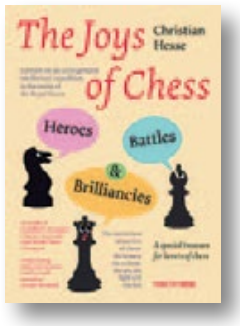

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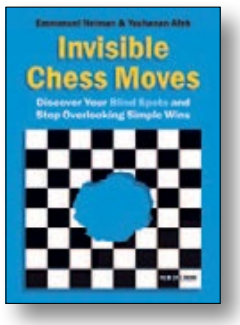

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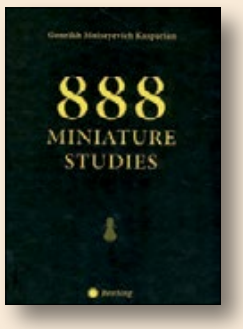

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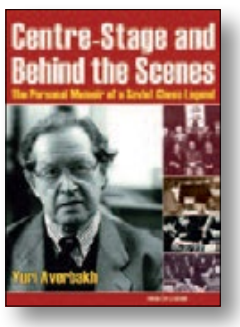

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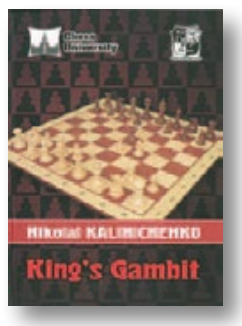

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'It is amazing how many small nuances can influence the outcome of a practical game even at the highest level. At the same time, people tend to say that modern classical chess is dead! In what crazy world are we living?'
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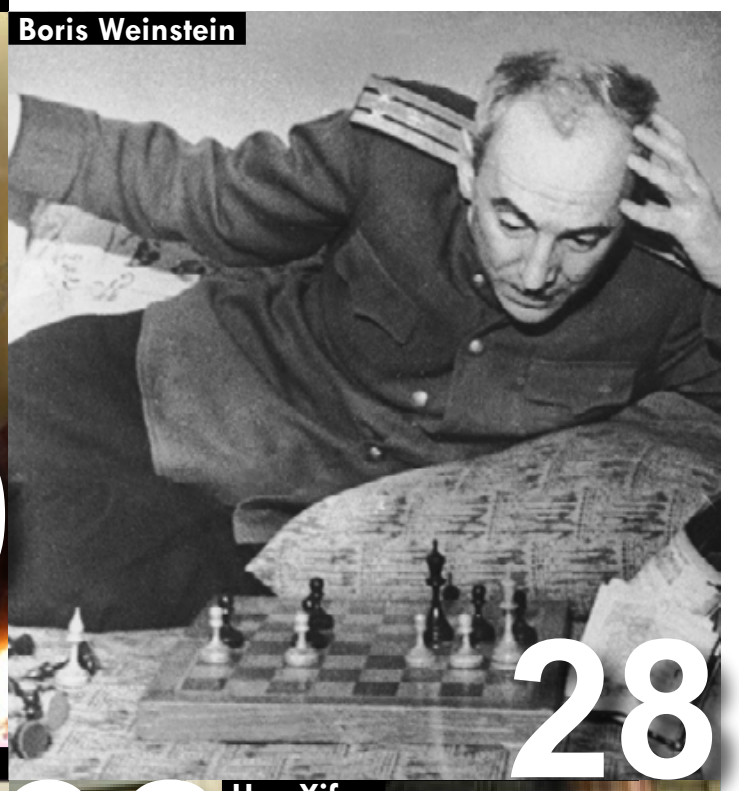

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Levon Aronian, Vladimir Barsky, Peter Boel, Magnus Carlsen, Mark Glukhovsky, Wang Hao, Garry Kasparov, Vladimir Kramnik, Peter Leko, Le Quang Liem, Luke McShane, Alexander Morozevich, Sergei Movsesian, Macauley Peterson, Ruslan Ponomariov, Hans Ree, Nigel Short, Genna Sosonko, Peter Svidler, Jan Timman

PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS
Vladimir Barsky, Biel Chess Festival, Boris Dolmatovsky

COVER PHOTO
Vladimir Kramnik: New In Chess

What does the IOC say?

Kirsan Ilyumzhinov likes to go and see people. With great regularity the FIDE website shows photos of the FIDE President on such 'working visits', seeking support for his plans both in his own country and abroad. In Russia he recently visited people as diverse as Mikhail Gorbachov, the last President of the USSR, and Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, known for his blunt and nationalistic views.

A foreign working visit that caught our eye was the meeting Mr. Ilyumzhinov had in the Philippines with the Head of the National Olympic Committee, Mr. Jose Cojuangco Jr. On this occasion Mr. Cojuangco signed an appeal to the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Mr. Jacques Rogge, and the IOC members requesting the inclusion of chess in the Olympic Games programme. On the FIDE site it says that Mr. Ilyumzhinov noted: 'We are working towards the goal of including chess in the programme of the Olympic Games. Following on from our longstanding consultations with the IOC and its Head, Mr. Jacques Rogge, it has become clear that we have good chances, but we need active support from the national federations and Olympic Committees.'

'What's all this about?' muttered a regular at the Café. 'Good chances? Didn't the IOC decide a long time ago that chess stood no chance to be included in the Olympic Games?' 'Well, maybe they changed their policy', one of his friends mumbled in reply. 'Ilyumzhinov wouldn't go on and on about this all the time if there wasn't a real chance, now would he?' 'I'm not so sure,' the other replied, biting his tongue, 'but why don't we try to find out what the situation is really like? Why don't we simply ask the IOC if there is a chance that chess will ever be included in the Olympic programme?'

No sooner said than done. The answer from Lausanne came sooner than we expected and perhaps the Heads of NOCs around the world should read it before they start writing pleas to the IOC. The reaction of the IOC was: 'To answer your question, please note that Chess is considered a "Mind Sport" and as part of its systematic review of the Sports Programme in 2002 the Olympic Programme Commission concluded that "Mind Sports" should not be eligible for admission to the Programme and there has been no change to these conclusions since then.'

In 2002? That is nine years ago! And how often in those years has our FIDE President told us that he hoped chess would be included in the Olympic Games soon and that there was good reason to be hopeful? Did FIDE never receive this information from the IOC? Not very likely. Among the further information the IOC sent us we found the following paragraph: 'Federations of sports which are not eligible to be considered for the Olympic Programme should be informed of this to avoid any unnecessary communication, lobbying and expense on their behalf.'

So, assuming that the inclusion of chess in the Olympic Games would be a wonderful thing, does this mean that all hopes of this happening have always been in vain? No, not quite. Till 2002 there was hope. To quote from the reply the IOC sent: 'In 1995, the IOC recognised the international bodies of the "games" of bridge (WBF) and chess (FIDE) as IOC-recognised organisations. Following this, an increasing number of NOCs began officially affiliating the national federations of these bodies, and the IOC therefore reviewed the status of the International Federations within the Olympic Movement. The status of the two Federations changed in 1999, when the IOC acknowledged that bridge and chess should be considered as sports, and therefore the status of the respective IFs changed from recognised organisations to Recognised Federations. However, in reviewing the requests of these sports for entry to the Olympic Programme in January 2002, the Programme Commission believed that the IOC should clarify the position of mind sports in relation to the Olympic Programme, and expressed the opinion that they should not be eligible for admission.'

Jose Cojuangco Jr. and Kirsan Ilyumzhinov with the appeal. 'A historical event took place in Manila', the FIDE website reported.

In case you're wondering by now what the IOC's definition of a mind game is, here it is: 'Sports where the physical elements are not necessarily performed by the player in the conduct of the competition.'

Having digested their reply we sent another message to the IOC, asking if they were aware that despite the decision in 2002, FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov continues to publicly state that chess has good chances to be included in the Olympic Games, and forwarded the FIDE press release of the Philippines NOC's Head to the IOC. This time the reaction, perhaps in an attempt to avoid further 'unnecessary communication' was brief: 'To our knowledge, we are not aware of this "appeal". As explained before, Chess is not eligible for admission to the Programme and the IOC's position has not changed since 2002.'

What's in a name?

Specialists such as Veselin Topalov and Magnus Carlsen may rightfully argue that chess is more physical than the IOC believes it to be, but they, too, may find it hard to prove that their physi-

cal fitness is the essence of what they are doing on the chess board. Chess is not generally seen as a very physical activity, unless physical violence becomes part of the game. Historical examples include William the Conqueror breaking a chess board over a French prince's head after losing a game, and Charlemagne's nephew Berthelot having his skull split with a golden chess board. A recent example of chess turning violent reached us from Petropavlovsk, Kamchatka, in Russia's Far East, where a 33-year-old man was sentenced to eight years in prison for killing a 25-year-old friend. He did so after one or more games of chess had turned into a heated dispute. Apparently, the victim had annoyed his attacker and provoked his rage by 'removing pieces from the board and other tricks'. Both players also happened to be quite drunk. The historians amongst us will be interested to learn that the name of the murderer was Alekhin!

Second Oscar for Carlsen

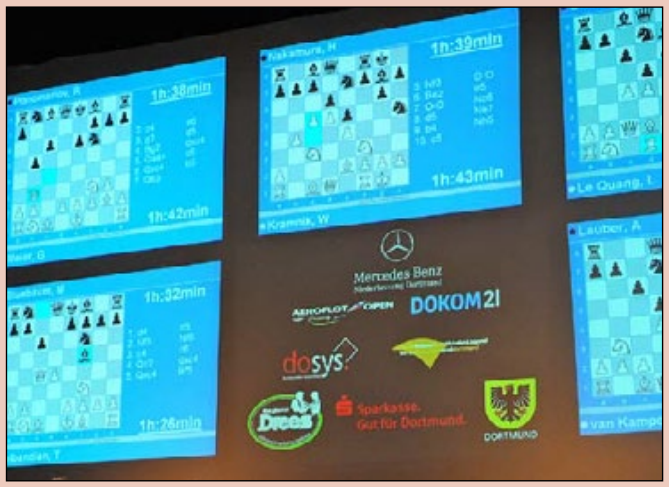
With wins in Wijk aan Zee, Bazna, Nanjing and London, 2010 was an excellent year for Magnus Carlsen. But so it was for Vishy Anand, who successfully defended his world title against Veselin Topalov in Sofia, did well in Bilbao, Nanjing and London, and briefly pushed Carlsen to the number two spot in the world rankings on the November 2010 list. As a result, the vote for the 2010 Chess Oscar promised to be a close one, and rarely was the difference between the winner and the runner-up so small. This is the top-10 as published by *64*, the Russian magazine that revived the Oscar in 1995. As in 2009, Carlsen emerged as the winner. 1. Magnus Carlsen (1264 points, 53 first places); 2. Vishy Anand (1244 points, 51 first places); 3. Levon Aronian (767 points, four first places); 4. Vladimir Kramnik (570 points); 5. Sergey Karjakin (535 points); 6. Veselin Topalov (437 points); 7. Ian Nepomniachtchi (435 points, two first places); 8. Vasily Ivanchuk (428 points, one first place); 9. Hikaru Nakamura (215 points); 10. Alexander Grischuk (169 points).

Magnus 'Oscar' Carlsen

Fifteen minutes of missed fame

As we had written about the 15-minute delay of live games in the fight against cheating in previous issues (see New In Chess 2011/3 and 4) – making no secret of the fact that we believe that this delay makes no sense if it's an isolated measure – we were obviously curious to see what the Dortmund organizers would do this year. Or rather how, if they had the delay again, they would defend it. Sure enough, the transmission of the moves from the Dortmund Stadttheater was again delayed by a quarter of an hour, and again nothing else was done to stop the players from cheating, probably for the perfectly acceptable reason that the organizers didn't suspect any of the participants of foul play. Asked why they once again had decided to delay the transmission of the moves, which automatically meant that journalists in the press room could not follow the games live either, tournament director Stefan Koth offered a theory that was not easy to comprehend but which we will try to summarize. Their own website delayed the moves to avoid cheating, as he believes this is a useful measure. Additional measures were absent, but the arbiters were entitled to search players if they had any suspicions. However, fortunately this had not been necessary in any of the rounds. What's more, cheating doesn't make much sense in Dortmund, said Mr. Koth, as they only have starting fees and no prize-money. They play for honour and glory and you cannot cheat for financial gains. He also explained why they delayed the moves on the monitors in the press room. If they didn't, journalists might send the moves to certain websites, while the organizers wanted to direct as much traffic as possible to their own website with an eye to the sponsors. A laudable goal, but despite his claim that they had considerably more visitors on their website this year, we are tempted to believe that most fans nevertheless followed the games at their favourite clubs or websites, where after all the moves were shown just as 'fast' as on the Dortmund website.

In fact, the only real effect of the delay was seen in the penultimate round, when Vladimir Kramnik secured his 10th tournament win in Dortmund with a short draw – a historic moment that was missed by the journalists in the press room. Once the news reached them and they jumped up hoping to congratulate the Russian and ask him to comment on this remarkable record, the press chief laconically informed them that Kramnik had long left for his hotel. ■



The playing hall in Dortmund 15 minutes ago.

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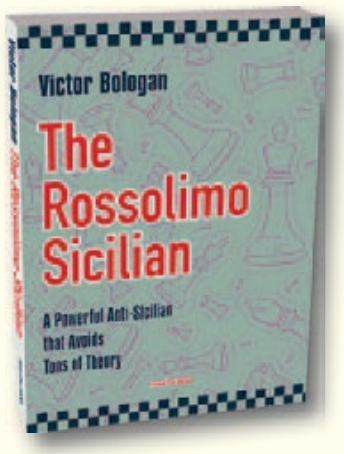

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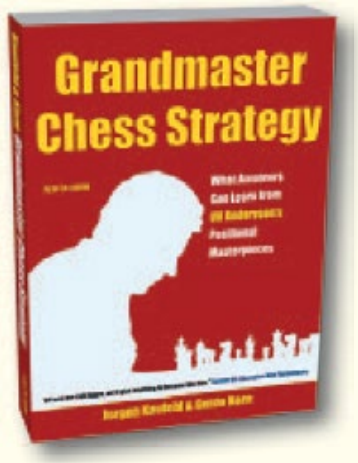

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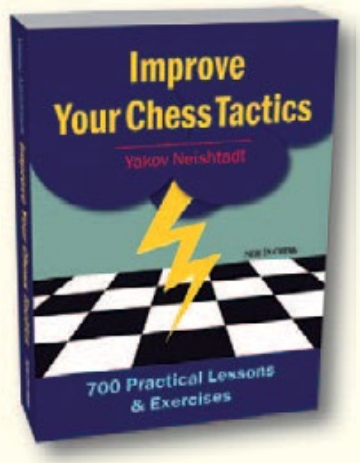

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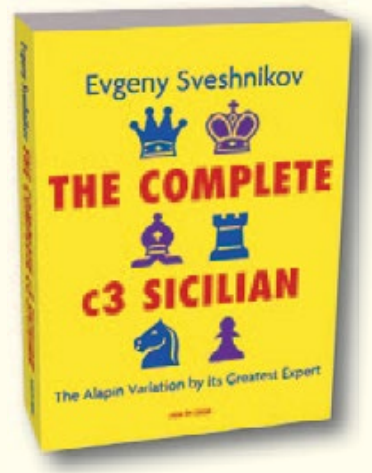

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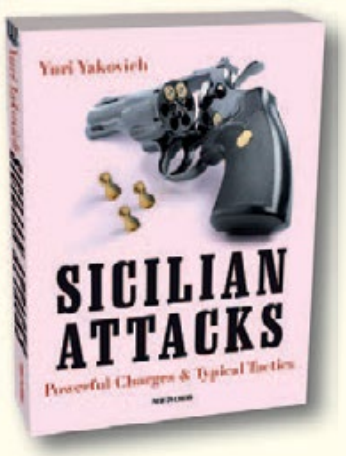

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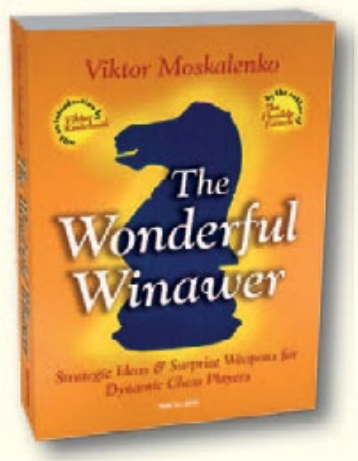

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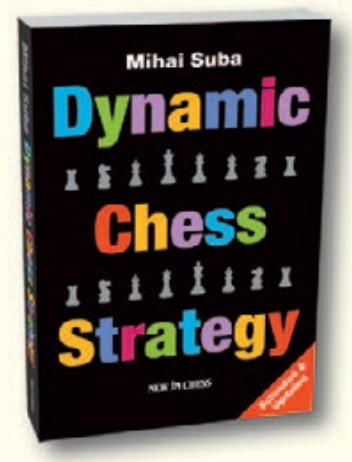

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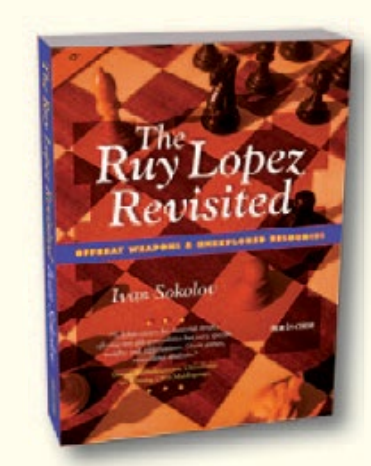

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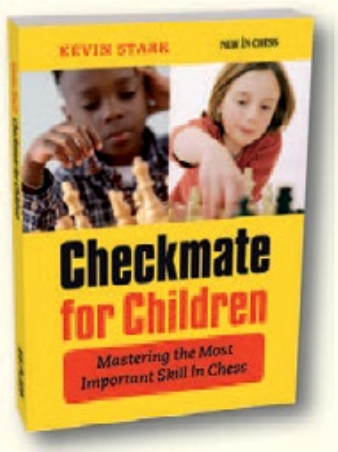

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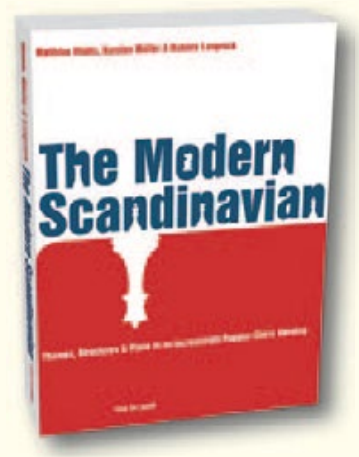

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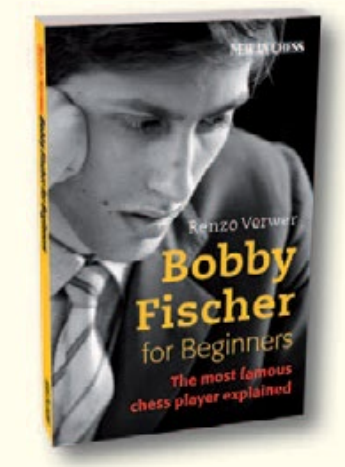

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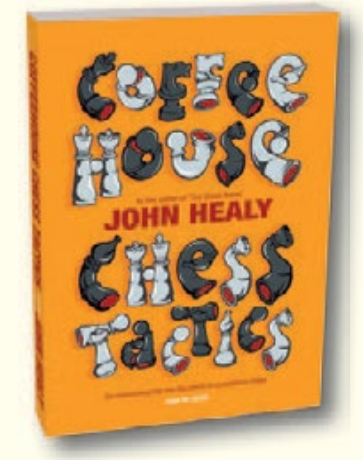

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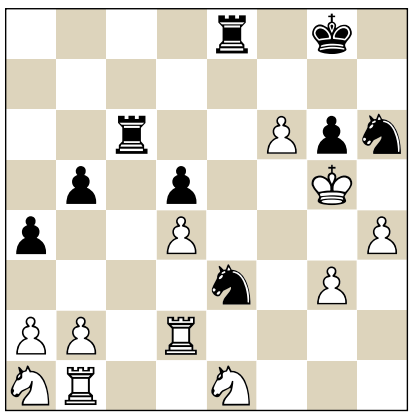
Your Move

More or less human move

In his analysis in New In Chess 2011/5 of the fifth match game against Alexey Shirov in Leon, Vishy Anand indicates 37...♔h7, instead of the text-move 37...♖e4, as 'the more human move'.



Shirov-Anand, Leon 2011 (5)
position after 37.♔g5

However, why didn't he indicate the simple 37...♘f7+ 38.♔xg6 ♖e4 and he would quickly have mated the white king? On 39.♖f2 (or 39.♖c2) follows 39...♖g4+ 40.♔h5 ♖g7! 41.fxg7 ♖h6 mate. And in case of another 41st move follows 41...♖h7+ and 42...♖h6 mate.
As for the further alternatives: 39.♖e2 ♖g4+ 40.♔h5 ♖xf6 (first ...♖g7 is also possible) 41.♖xe3 ♖g7 42.♖e8+ ♔h7 and mate with ...♖h6.
And after 39.♘f3 follows 39...♘g4 and a subsequent mate with 40...♖xf6 and 41...♖h6.

Henk Treur
Oudewater, The Netherlands

Editorial postscript

As your computer will have told you, the lines that you give are obviously correct. Yet, calling the lines after 37...♘f7+ 'simple' is a bit of a stretch if we keep in mind that Anand was playing an actual game. Which was also the reason why from the alternatives to the text-move he chose 'the more human 37...♔h7'.

The human core

Congratulations to Harry Benson for his superb photographs of Bobby Fischer that appeared together with his interview in New In Chess 2011/4. A more balanced and objective 'picture' of the champion is what we really need. Little by little, the deep and more human core is emerging. And I guess it is not over. More needs to be understood.

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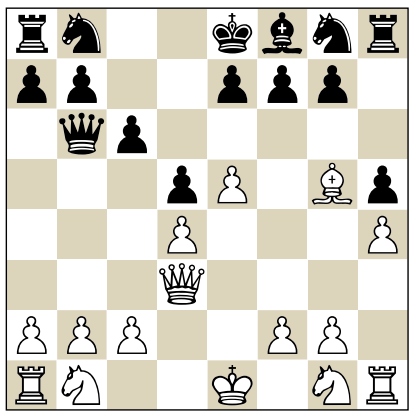
or e-mail: editors@newinchess.com
Letters may be edited or abridged

For instance, research is required of the years that Bobby Fischer spent in a religious community. It seems that so far little information has emerged from that period in his life.

Philippe Briffaut
Loreto, Italy

See Yearbook 100!

I've always liked Mikhail Tal's 3.e5 lines in the Caro-Kann (especially if I get to play g4 and e6). The game from his match against Alexey Shirov that Vishy Anand annotated in New In Chess 2011/5 puzzled me. After 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.h4 h5 5.♗g5 ♕b6 6.♗d3 ♗xd3 7.♕xd3



I was wondering: why not take the pawn on b2 (instead of 7....♕a6)? How does White refute this move? After 7...♕xb2 I see nothing better than going into the pawn down ending with 8.♕b3 (I do not see how 8.e6 ♕xa1 9.exf7+ ♔xf7 works, for example 10.♕f5+ ♘f6). Please enlighten me!
PS: Is Magnus Carlsen the Justin Bieber of chess?

Robert Both,
Milwaukee, WI, USA

Editorial postscript

Let's start with an attempt to answer your second question first. We fail to see many similarities between Magnus Carlsen and Justin Bieber and are therefore inclined to say no.

However, your first question is much easier and we gladly refer you to Yearbook 100, which we are proud to say has just been published and which happens to contain a Survey by Hazai and Lukacs on exactly this line!

Here is the relevant part for you: taking the b2 pawn is not a very good idea. After 8.e6! (you were on the right path) 8...fxe6 9.♘f3, White had more than enough compensation for the pawn in Firman-Makarov, Alushta 2006 (that game continued 9...♘bd7 10.0-0-0 11.♕xa1 ♕b3 and the queen was trapped).

In Perunovic-Lalith, Dubai 2009, Black immediately took the rook, and after 8...♕xa1 9.♕b3 ♕xd4 10.♕xb7 he lost it back on a8 and quickly collapsed.

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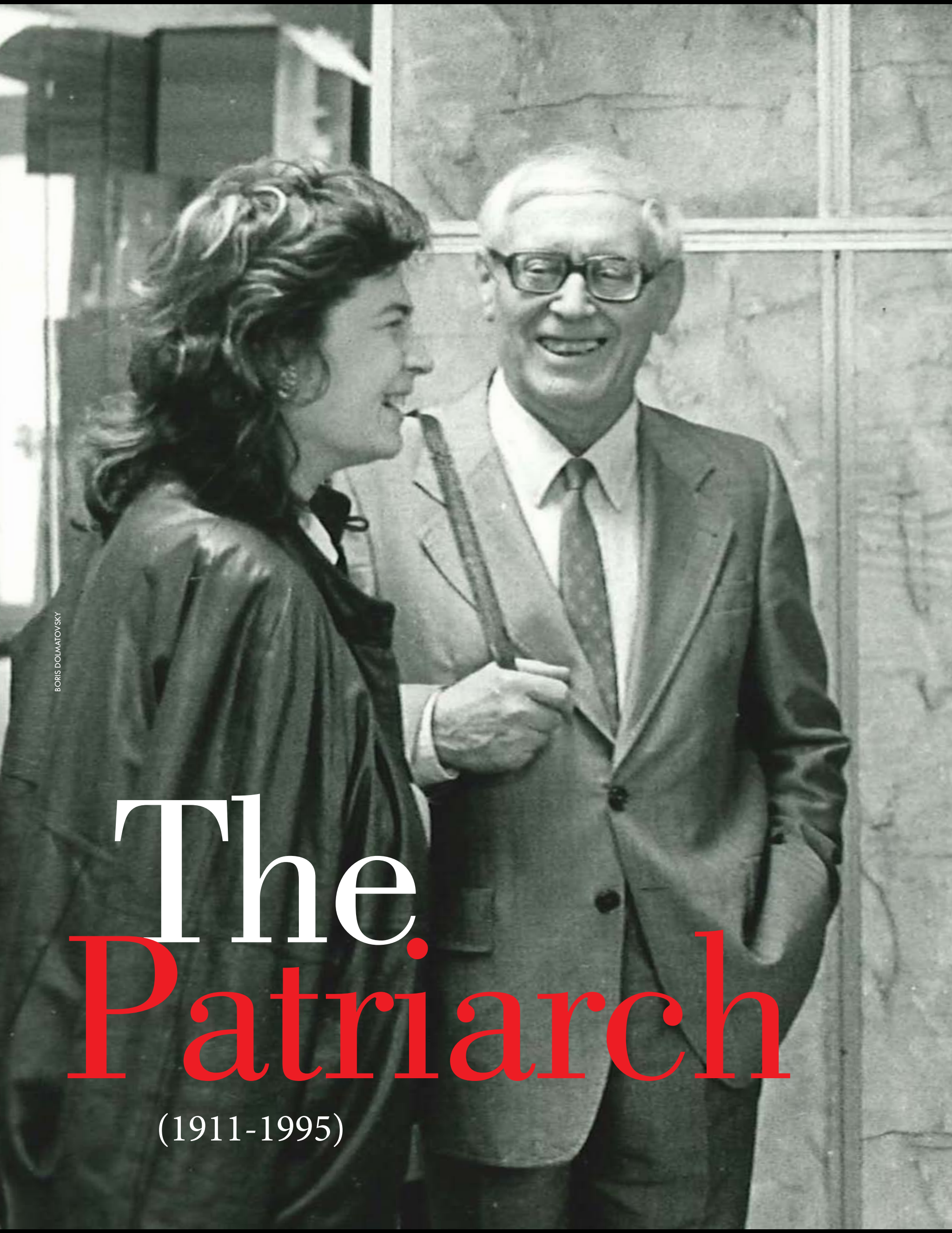


BORIS DOLMATOVSKY

The Patriarch

(1911-1995)

August 17 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mikhail Moiseevich Botvinnik, three-time World Champion and one of the most influential personalities in chess history. With his scientific approach, Botvinnik played a pivotal role in the development of Soviet chess. Among his pupils were later World Champions Karpov, Kasparov and Kramnik. The Patriarch was generally known as a stern and serious man, but he also had his moments, as witness this unusual photo of a light conversation with Nana Ioseliani, Nana Alexandria and Lev Polugaevsky.

As if their main mission was to ridicule the messengers of the imminent death of classical chess, the invited grandmasters in Biel's top group gave their all to show how adventurous and mesmerizing long games still can be. Spoiling for a fight in each and every game, Magnus Carlsen triumphed and confirmed his number one position in the world, but perhaps the biggest sensation was the comeback of runner-up Alexander Morozevich. Faster than anyone could have dreamed of, the Russian daredevil is fighting his way back to the top. Bursting with creativity he doesn't see what's wrong with classical chess either: 'I have never seen such a crisis. For me these people are discussing a non-existing problem.'
Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam reports from Biel.

Classic Carlsen has a ball *in Biel*

NEW IN CHESS

One of the attractions of the Biel Festival is that all groups play in the same hall. At the start of his game against Morozevich, Magnus Carlsen spots something noteworthy in one of the opens.

At the entrance of the main hall of the Biel Congress Centre, the participants are informed in German, French and English that they will be watched by video cameras. A necessary precaution, the organizers believe, after they were confronted by stories of cheating last year. One month after the event they received a letter that described how three French players had been acting suspiciously, a letter that became even more alarming when these same three players were caught in the act of signalling moves at the Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk. The French chess federation took immediate action and suspended the players, but due to legal technicalities it is still far from clear whether they will really be banned.

Tournament director Olivier Breisacher stresses that he will happily allow the courts to decide the fate of the three Frenchmen, but based on what he knows and thinks, he realized that measures had to be taken. 'We had to find a middle way between inertia, doing nothing, and paranoia. We have to get used to the new situation without thinking that everybody is guilty. We cannot say that we don't know.' But the last thing he wants is a witch hunt and he is happy with the traditionally large number of French participants in Biel to emphasize that to his mind cheating is certainly not a typically French phenomenon. To some, the video registration may sound scarier than it actually is. In line with Swiss law, all footage will be deleted one month after the event, and when I spoke to Breisacher on the final day of the tournament none of it had been watched yet for the simple reason that there had been no

suspicions. Understandably, the participants, or anyone else, were not allowed to use telephones, laptops, tablets or MP3-players in the hall, but perhaps the most effective further measure was the presence of several incognito tournament officials walking around and monitoring the traffic to the toilets.

In fact, his concern about cheating was one of Breisacher's lesser worries this year. Switzerland's ultra-strong currency makes it an expensive country, and it was only thanks to the truly excellent hotel rates negotiated with local hotels that they managed to attract a fine and representative field for the open tournaments that are the backbone of the festival.

But the biggest problem of all, and this concerned the top group that has to attract indispensable media attention, was the clash of Biel with two major other events, the grandmaster tournament in Dortmund and the World Teams in Ningbo. The clash with Dortmund they could live with. After all, their German colleagues depend on the availability of the venue, the Stadttheater, in the summer season, and with three top-10 players booked, there still would be enough stars to choose from to guarantee the elite character of the Biel grandmaster group.

But FIDE's decision to hold the World Teams at the same time caused a real headache. Suddenly 85 per cent of the top players travelled to China, seriously reducing the pool Biel could choose from. In the current climate of various top events struggling to survive, Mr. Breisacher is at a loss how this could happen. 'I think it's a lack of respect and consideration on FIDE's part towards Dortmund and Biel.' He had asked a member of the FIDE presidential board how they could have taken such a decision. The FIDE official had asked in return: 'Why didn't you publish your dates?' After that reaction Mr. Breisacher had found it hard to come up with an answer. After all, what can you reply to such a question if your tournament has been held in this same period for the past 44 years?

'I think it's a lack of respect and consideration on FIDE's part towards Dortmund and Biel.'

In the face of such obstacles it's a small miracle that this year's grandmaster tournament was a highly attractive one, possibly even one of the best ever. Fortunately, they also had some luck. To begin with, none other than Magnus Carlsen expressed his wish to return to Biel. Not because the winner of 2007 wanted to warm up for the busy programme that is awaiting him this autumn ('I take each tournament individually'), but because he feels at ease in the Swiss town. Of course he didn't offer to play for free, but once the world number one had expressed his interest, the organizers didn't fail to take action. Private sponsors were found to enable his participation and the Accentus foundation, which in earlier years had sponsored the women's tournament, decided that Carlsen's participation was a good cause. And finally, Biel worked together with the Zurich chess club, where Carlsen gave a lecture and simul on the eve of the tournament.

Another big fish was Alexander Morozevich, winner in 2003, 2004 and 2006, who was happy to make his come-back in one of his favourite tournaments. When he signed his contract, the Russian didn't know yet that he was going to shine in the Russian Higher League just before Biel, but obviously his win there further contributed to the excitement of his participation.

Alexey Shirov, a third crowd-puller, was not on the original menu. Shirov replaced Vugar Gashimov, who

NEW IN CHESS

Tournament director Olivier Breisacher and one of his most loyal guests Yannick Pelletier.

faced a difficult dilemma after he had signed a contract to play in Biel. An old conflict with his federation was suddenly resolved after the new coach of the Azeri team, Vladimir Tukmakov, had insisted on a rapprochement, and Gashimov was asked to join the national team in China. The situation was saved by Emil Sutovsky, who acted as mediator. Born in Baku and living in Israel, a country Breisacher has close ties with, Sutovsky turned out to be the right man to forge a compromise. Biel was compensated for the loss of Gashimov and thanks to this gesture they could contract Shirov.

Add to this trio France's number one Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, fellow-2700+ GM Fabiano Caruana and regular guest Yannick Pelletier, and you will understand that 10 rounds of heart-warming chess were guaranteed. Chess that dispelled all the pessimism created by the Candidates' matches in Kazan and showed how alive the game still is if you take the trouble of playing it instead of making quick draws.

The star of the event was Magnus Carlsen. According to Olivier Breisacher, the presence of the Norwegian led to 20 per cent more participants in the opens and stirred up great public interest. A young Italian fan even persuaded his father to drive all the way from Rome to Biel to get his idol's autograph.

The interest of the media didn't diminish when Carlsen won his first two games. In the first round he patiently outplayed Pelletier in the endgame. In the second round he disposed of Shirov with remarkable ease.

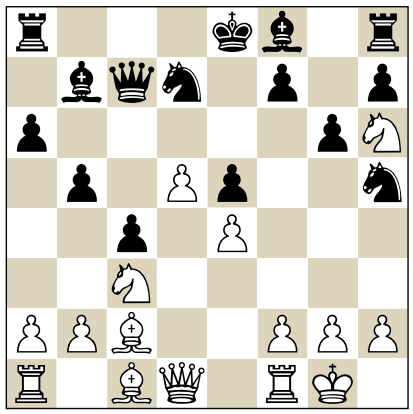
SL 9.4 – D47
Magnus Carlsen
Alexey Shirov
Biel 2011 (2)

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♗d3 dxc4 7.♗xc4 b5 8.♗d3 ♗b7 9.0-0 a6 10.e4 c5 11.d5 c4 12.♗c2 ♕c7 13.

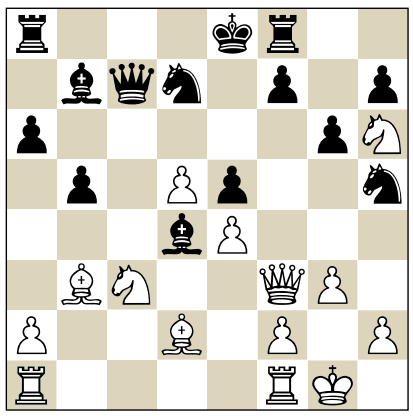
BIEL CHESS FESTIVAL

Lots of football is one of the further attractions in Biel. Magnus Carlsen is well in time to conquer the ball before Maxime Vachier-Lagrave manages to do so.

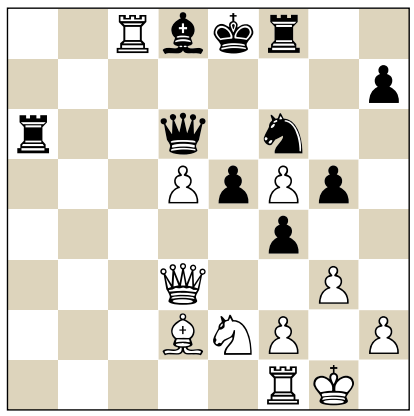
♘d4 e5 The more common move is 13...♘c5. **14.♘f5 g6 15.♘h6 ♘h5**



16.g3 A logical choice. After 16.♕f3 ♘f4 17.♘xf7 ♔xf7 18.g3 g5 19.gxf4 gxf4 Black was fine in Gelfand-Dreev, Tilburg 1993, a game that Carlsen knew and that Black won. **16...♗c5** This also looks logical, but after **17.♕f3 ♖f8 18.♗d2** Carlsen thought that Black was already in serious trouble, because of the threat b4. **18...♗d4** If Black tries to prevent White's threat with 18...♕d6, Carlsen intended to play 19.b4 anyway, and after 19...♗xb4 20.a4 ♗xc3 21.♕xc3 White has ample compensation for the pawn. **19.b4 cxb3 20.♗xb3**



20...♕d6 Black cannot play 20...b4 21.♘e2 ♗xa1 22.♗xb4, for example: 22...♗b2 23.♗xf8 ♘xf8 24.d6 ♕d7 25.♗a4. **21.♖ac1 ♘g7 22.a4 f5** His only chance at counterplay, but White's pieces are too well-positioned. **23.axb5 f4 24.♘e2 ♗b6 25.bxa6 ♗xa6 26.♗c4 g5 27.♗xa6 ♖xa6** Carlsen also looked at 27...♕xh6 28.♗b5 ♕h3 29.♔h1! g4 30.♘g1 ♕xf1 31.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 32.♕xg4+, and Black falls apart. **28.♖c8+ ♗d8** 28...♔e7 is met by 29.♖c6 ♗xf2+ 30.♖xf2 ♖xc6 31.dxc6 ♕xc6 32.♗b4+, and curtains. **29.♘f5 ♘xf5 30.exf5 ♘f6 31.♕d3**

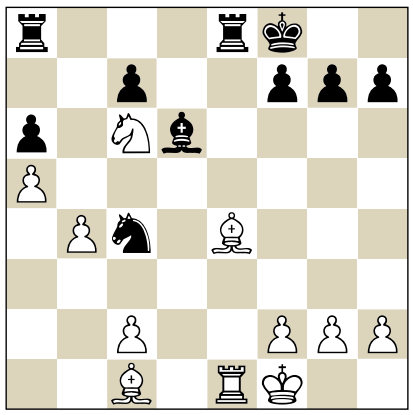


31...♖a7 Another nice line is 31...♖b6 32.♗a5 ♖b8 33.♗c7!. **32.♕b5+ ♕d7** Or 32...♖d7 33.♗b4 ♕xd5 34.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 35.♕b8 mate. **33.♖xd8+** Black resigned.

Shirov felt that he had been lost after only 15 moves, an assessment that comes close to the truth. The Spaniard was also happy to return to Biel, where in 1991, at the age of 19, he won his first major international tourna-

ment. In the 1990s he played in Biel three more times and when asked to come back for a fifth visit, he half-jokingly replied that he would only come if he got the same hotel room as he had in 1991! In the intervening years, Hotel Elite had changed owners twice and on both occasions the building had been thoroughly renovated. Still, it was determined with a fair amount of certainty in which room Shirov had stayed. This time it didn't yield him first place, as his play was too erratic. 'My final result is not a disaster, but it's not good enough to be in the top 10 of the world any longer. Could I show results to really come back into the top 10? I am not really sure. It's difficult to say before the World Cup ends. I think this tournament showed that the last word has not yet been said.'

When he won his third game in Round 4, Carlsen seemed to be on his way to a record score. After the tournament Yannick Pelletier, who was very disappointed by his play, said that after his second loss to Carlsen he had thought of Viktor Kortchnoi's interview in New In Chess 2011/3, in which he said that the Norwegian hypnotizes his opponents. In that fourth round Fabiano Caruana must have had similar feelings. An exchange sacrifice had given Carlsen the initiative, but there was no real reason for Caruana to lose his nerve.



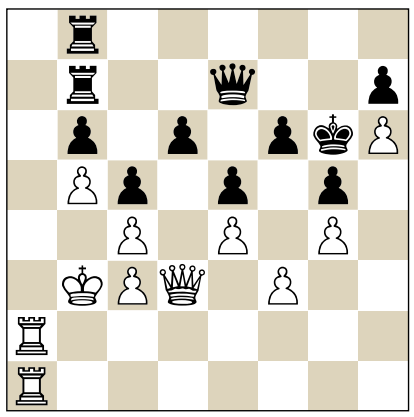
Carlsen-Caruana
position after 24...a6

25.f4 Carlsen pushed the pawn thinking that 24...a6 was a blunder and trying to trap Black's knight. **25...♖e6?** And Black follows up with a real blunder that loses a piece. The moment he released his f-pawn, Carlsen saw that Black could play 25...♘e3+, and White's winning chances are out of the window. But after 26.♖xe3 ♗xf4 27.♖f3 ♗xc1 28.♗d5 f6 he should be able to make a draw. **26.♗d5 ♖f6** After 26...♖xe1+ 27.♔xe1 ♖e8+ 28.♔f2 the black knight has no squares. **27.♖e4** Black resigned.

Caruana had a disastrous start, with only two draws from his first five games, but he fought back admirably in the second half, where he scored plus one.

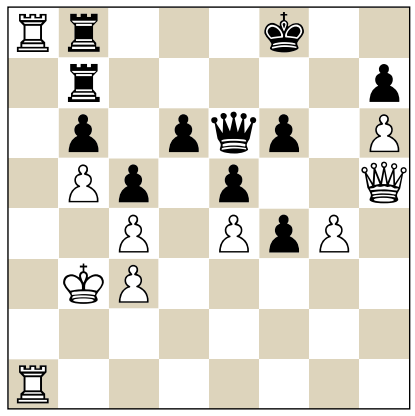
The tournament regained its suspense when Carlsen lost in Round 5. Playing unrecognizably passively in the opening, he ended up in an awkward position against Vachier-Lagrave. The Frenchman had all the time in the world to improve his position and find the right moment to make a breakthrough. In hindsight it was tempting to see a connection between Carlsen's play and the terrorist bloodbath in Norway that shook the world that day, but he preferred to see his opponent's better play as the real reason. He expressed his feelings for the victims and their families with well-chosen words on his blog.

The game against Vachier-Lagrave entered its decisive phase after the first time-control. Patiently the Frenchman manoeuvred till the time was ripe for the decisive break.



Vachier-Lagrave-Carlsen
position after 77...♔g6

78.f4!! Finally White is ready. **78...gxf4** Black cannot play 78...♔xh6 because of 79.♖h2+ ♔g7 80.♖ah1 ♔h8 81.fxg5 fxg5 82.♖xh7+ ♕xh7 83.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 84.♕xd6 and wins. **79.♕h3 ♔f7 80.♖a8** Even more convincing was 80.♕h5+ ♔f8 81.♕f5. **80...♕e6** 80...♕d7 81.♕h5+ ♔f8 82.♕f5 is pretty much the same story, and 80...♖xa8 81.♖xa8 ♖a7 runs into 82.♕h5+ ♔e6 83.♖e8. **81.♕h5+ ♔f8**



82.♕f5! ♕xf5 83.gxf5 ♖xa8 83...f3 would lead to another zugzwang: 84.♖xb8+ ♖xb8 85.♔c2 f2 86.♔d3 f1♕+! 87.♖xf1 ♖a8 88.♖g1 ♖a7 89.♖g2. **84.♖xa8+ ♔f7 85.♔c2 ♖e7 86.♔d3 ♖e8 87.♖a7+ ♔g8** Or 87...♖e7 88.♖a6 ♖b7 89.♖a8, and wins. **88.♖g7+ ♔f8 89.♖xh7 ♔g8 90.♖a7! ♔h8 91.h7!** The rest is trivial, as there is only one piece that needs to join the action now. **91...♖b8 92.♔e2 ♖d8 93.♔f3 ♖c8 94.♔g4 ♖d8 95.♔h5 f3 96.♔g6** Black resigned.

Having taken a mathematical look at his opponents, Vachier-Lagrave had hoped on a plus-2 result in Biel. The main reason this plan didn't completely work out were his two losses against Morozevich. In the first game he lost from a winning position, in the second he took too many risks in his wish to complicate matters. With 50 per cent he shared third place with Shirov.

Carlsen picked up the thread in the second half with a slightly fortunate win over Pelletier and his best game of the event against Shirov. Playing Black, the Norwegian tenaciously and ambitiously kept looking for his

NEW IN CHESS

The cover photo of the debut album of the French rock group With Two Names. (L. to r.) Andrei Sokolov, frontman Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Christian Bauer and Yannick Pelletier.

chances and struck mercilessly when they arrived.

The fight for first place ended prematurely in the penultimate round, when his only real rival, Alexander Morozevich, lost to Caruana, giving Carlsen an insurmountable four-point lead (with a win yielding three points and a draw 1).

Carlsen was the deserved winner, showing ambition, determination and, a few lesser moments aside, great chess (for his views on the tournament, see the interview further on). Ready to fight every day, he showed the world how fascinating chess can be if you desire to play.

The same could be said of Alexander Morozevich who, at the age of 34, was the revelation of the event. Although his openings have been less unorthodox in recent years than they used to be, the Russian daredevil has always had a large fan base. His wish to enter complex positions and his hungry search for the secrets chess continues to hoard are a guarantee for gripping games. His hard-fought draw against Shirov in Round 6 was further proof of how wonderful imperfection can be. Both players rightly felt that they had spoiled a win, but the impartial spectator couldn't care less, since he or she had seen a fantastic and wildly complicated fight.

Morozevich's comeback after a deep crisis in 2010 must fill his fans with hope and confidence. Last year he took a long break after his rating had dropped below 2700 and accepted a job as a coach in Doha for six months. He was disgusted with the level of his play and wondered how he could fight back. Accepting the invitation to Biel was one step that signalled his wish to play again. To warm up he asked the new president of the Russian Federation, Ilya Levitov, if he could play in the Russian Higher League. And he also asked if there was a chance he could enter the World Cup, for which he had not qualified. His recent doubts and hesitation make one smile now. As we know now, he convincingly won the Higher League, qualified for the Russian Super Final, where he finished second, and impressed in Biel. In the live ratings he has shot up to 18th place with a rating of 2737 and a gain of 43(!) points. Who is not curious to see how he will do in the World Cup?

NOTES BY
Magnus Carlsen

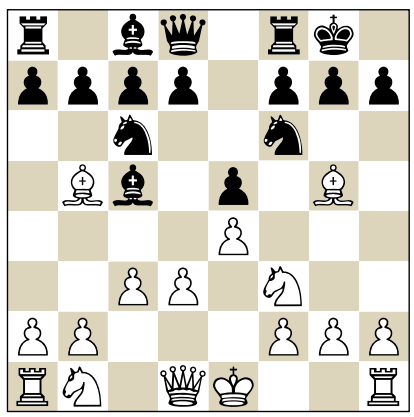
RL 7.1 – C65
Alexey Shirov
Magnus Carlsen
Biel 2011 (7)

I decided to annotate this game, as it was quite typical for the Biel tournament: interesting, fighting, and far from flawless.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3 After thinking for a few minutes Shirov decided that he didn't feel like playing the Berlin endgame that day.

4...♗c5 I played 4...d6 against Ivanchuk in Bazna and got a decent position, but a little change never hurts.

5.c3 0-0 6.♗g5



As far as I could remember, not much had happened in this line since Anand-Topalov, San Luis 2005, where Topalov played ...h6 and …g5 and got a good position. However, I was not particularly interested in finding out what Shirov had prepared there.

6...h6 7.♗h4 ♗e7

Once the white bishop is on h4, this waste of tempo is regarded as justified.

8.♘bd2

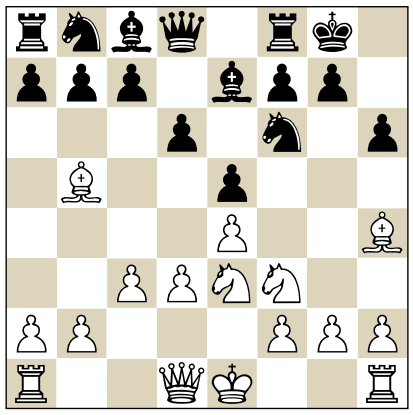
It is important to note that 8.♗xc6 is not good due to the standard trick 8...bxc6 (8...dxc6 9.♗g3 is trickier, but probably also quite playable: 9...♗g4! 10.♗xe5 ♘d7 11.♗g3 ♘c5) 9.♘xe5 ♘xe4!.

8...d6 9.♘f1 ♘b8

Another wasted tempo, but since White has spent a few tempi with the knight, and in view of the closed

nature of the position, I felt that I could afford taking such liberties.
For those interested in alternatives, I refer you to my engine and its top choices of 9...♖b8 and 9...a5.

10.♘e3



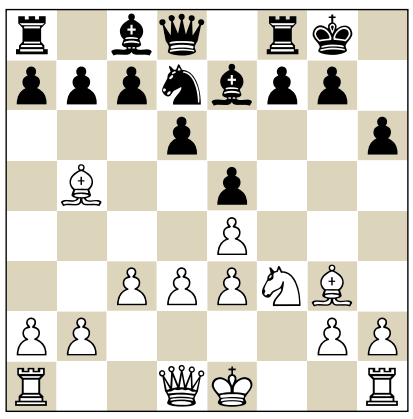
10...♘g4

10...♘bd7 was my first intention, not in connection with the usual plan of ...♖e8, ...♗f8, and so on, but rather 'trapping' the white bishop with ...♘b6. However, I was not sure about what to do after 11.♗a4!, which is clearly better than 11.0-0 ♘b6! 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.d4 c6, with a perfectly satisfactory position. Alternatively, 11.♘f5 might look tempting, but after 11...♘b6 12.g4 (12.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 13.0-0 ♗g4 14.h3 ♗h5 with comfortable equality) 12...♗xf5 13.gxf5 d5 Black takes over the initiative, e.g. 14.♘xe5 c6 15.♗a4 ♘xe4.

11.♗g3

I was sort of expecting this. Exchanging on e7 would have led to dull equality, which was not Shirov's plan.

11...♘xe3 12.fxe3 ♘d7



13.d4

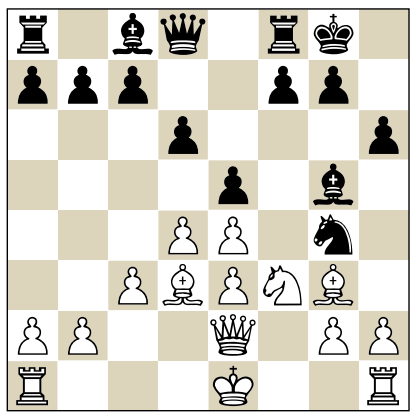
Somewhat surprisingly, this was the last chance for White to castle kingside comfortably in this game. However, his desire to play te text before I can play ...♘f6 is perfectly understandable, since Black would have fairly easy play after that: 13.0-0 ♘f6 14.♕c2?! (14.♗c4 ♗e6, with equal play, is better) 14...a6 15.♗a4 b5 16.♗b3 ♗b7. Now Black is intending ...c5, and White already has to be a little careful, as ♘h4 is met by ...♘xe4.

13...♘f6!?

This move, starting some concrete play, is maybe not completely sound, but looked too interesting to let go.
13...♗f6 14.0-0 ♕e7, with a solid position, was quite reasonable as well.

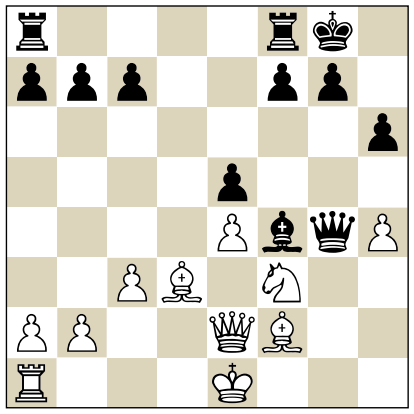
14.♗d3 ♘g4 The logical follow-up.

15.♕e2 ♗g5



16.dxe5

I was a little surprised to see this, as only Black can be better in the resulting positions.
The critical option was 16.h3, which forces Black to take on e3 and leave his knight stranded. In view of that, one might argue that Black is not really threatening anything. However, as castling either way runs into a bishop check on e3, and White doesn't have too many other useful moves, it makes sense to force the issue: 16...♘xe3 17.dxe5 (17.h4 ♗f4 18.♗f2 exd4 19.cxd4 ♘f5!) 17...dxe5 18.h4 ♗f4 (18...♘xg2+ 19.♕xg2 ♕xd3 20.hxg5 ♗g4 21.♘xe5 ♕e3+ 22.♔f1 f5 23.gxh6 fxe4+ 24.♗f2 leaves Black powerless) 19.♗f2 ♘xg2+ (19...♘g4 20.g3 wins a piece under much better circumstances for White) 20.♔f1 ♕f6 21.♔xg2 ♕g6+ 22.♔f1 ♗g4 23.♖g1 ♕h5 24.♖xg4 (24.♘d4 f5!, with a dangerous attack – 24...♗xe2+ 25.♗xe2) 24...♕xg4 25.♔e1!

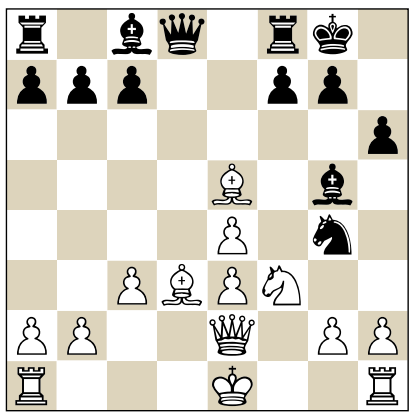


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and with the king running to safety, White should have the better long-term prospects.

16...dxe5 17.♗xe5

17.h3 ♘xe3 18.h4 would have transposed to the variations after 16.h3.

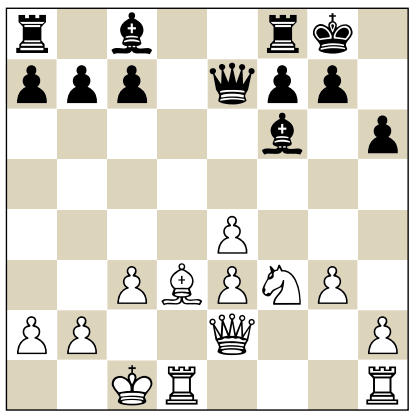


17...♗h4+

It's useful to weaken White's light squares on the kingside and possibly give my light-squared bishop a nice foothold on g4 or h3.
17...♗xe3 18.♗d4 did not look too inviting.

18.g3 ♘xe5 19.♘xe5 ♗f6 20.♘f3 ♕e7 21.0-0-0

21.0-0 ♗g4 is very comfortable for Black. After the weakening g3, the white king might not feel particularly comfortable in the future.



BIEL CHESS FESTIVAL

Magnus Carlsen: 'Unless someone goes completely crazy we are not going to see the end of classical tournaments any time soon'

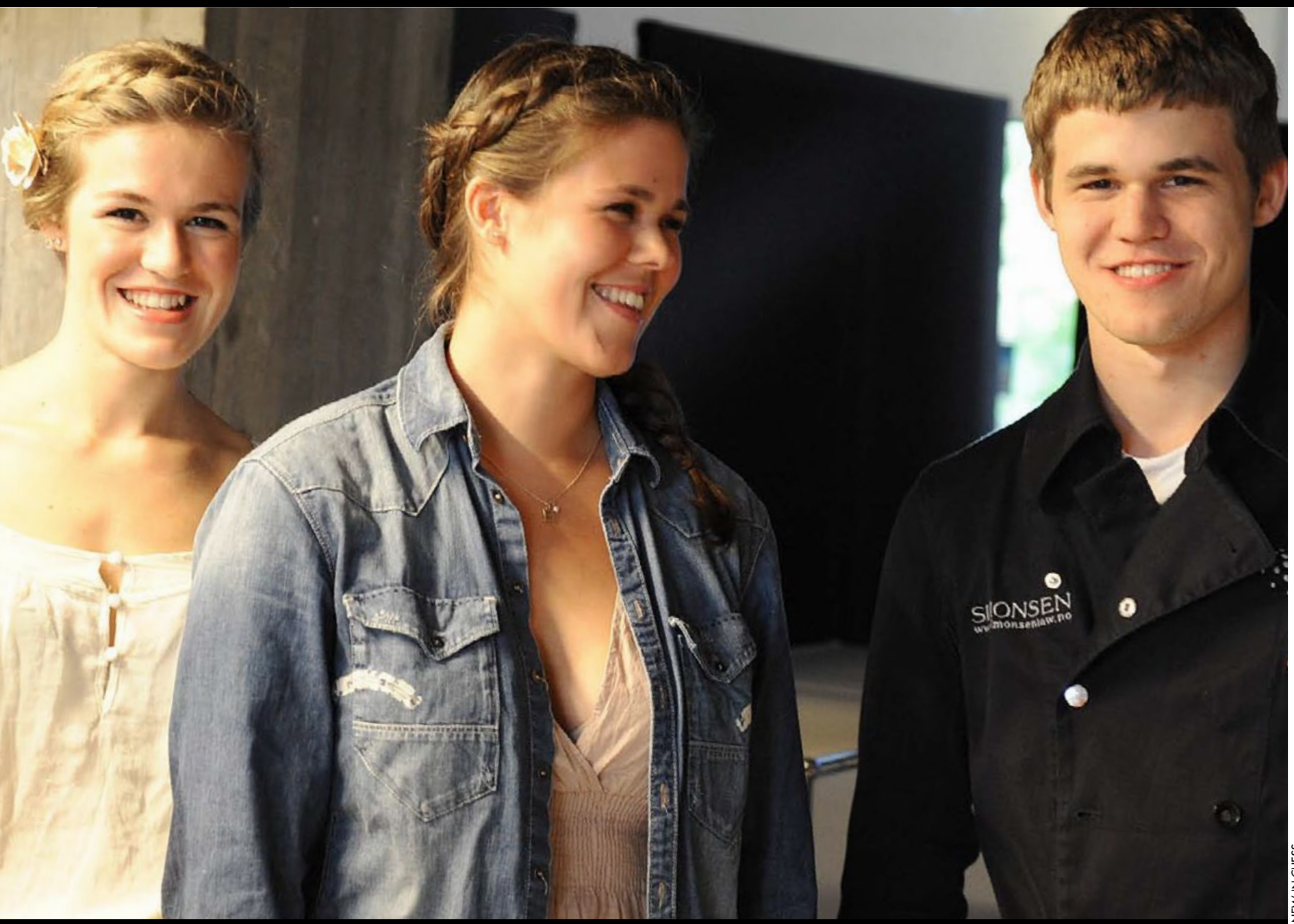
There's no place like home, but some places come pleasantly close. Fond of the outdoor life, mountain trekking and skiing in his home country of Norway, Magnus Carlsen feels very much at ease in Switzerland. Before the tournament in Biel he spent one week in Zermatt, a picturesque village at an altitude of 1620 metres at the foot of the Matterhorn (4478 metres). He went there together with his parents and sisters, just as in 2005 and 2006. Most Alpine mountains over 4,000 metres are situated in the vicinity of Zermatt, but you need not necessarily climb their peaks to enjoy the area. 'You can walk up to 3,400 metres or something like this, and from there you have to climb. I walked up to 3,100, 3,200 metres several times, but I am not so keen on climbing with ropes and everything, or on the glaciers. I just like hiking and enjoying the fresh air. I also wanted to go skiing one day, but then there was fog and it was closed, so that was a bummer.'

Carlsen firmly believes in the beneficial effects of high-altitude training and feels it has helped him at the chess board. 'Yeah, I think it did. Some of the days I was walking, you know, really fast for a long time and I could feel it afterwards that it was good for me.'

And there is another similarity between his own country and Switzerland that he doesn't forget to mention with a grin: 'It's extremely expensive too, like Norway. But ultimately I decided that I would not complain too much that the Swiss Franc is booming, because I get paid in Swiss Francs.'

After securing first prize in the Accentus Grandmaster Tournament, Magnus Carlsen sits down in a quiet corner of the restaurant of the Biel Congress Centre. The medal he has just received at the prize-giving is still around his neck. He tries to look accessible and ready to talk, but it's also clear that he feels a bit tired. It's not only the end of a long tournament, but he's never been a fan of early last rounds either. Today, Round 10 started at 11 am, a time that, in his eyes, is far from ideal for professional chess. On top of this, the temperatures in Biel suddenly went up to summer heights the previous night, which didn't go unnoticed in a hotel room without air conditioning. 'I could not sleep till like four or five, and I woke up at nine and felt terrible.'

But all these are minor details now. After he's accomplished what he came here for it remains easy to explain why he is always happy to play in Biel. 'I like the place. It's easy to get something to



Perhaps next time Anton Corbijn should also invite Magnus Carlsen's sisters Ingrid and Ellen.

eat, it's easy to get around, it's easy to go and play football after the rounds. And also, it's nice that there is an open tournament and that some of my friends can be here, my sisters, my family. Let's be fair, there are stronger tournaments, but it's a tournament I very much like playing. It's fun to play some of these more social events a couple of times a year.' Yet he also sees a clear risk. 'I don't know if that atmosphere is really compatible with playing at absolute top level. Unfortunately, the quality of play suffers accordingly. In general I did not think that my play here was very good. But it was enough, I suppose.' To which he adds, almost apologetically: 'I set high standards for myself.'

Carlsen's light self-criticism must sound slightly strange to the fans that followed his and his colleagues' games in Biel. In the wake of the Candidates' matches in Kazan there was palpable relief about the open and creative chess there. The clouds of endless draws that darkened the chess landscape were blown away and the sun was shining again. 'Yes. I think that this is generally one of the good things of this tournament, and also Dortmund right now. People are not comparing variations, they are playing chess. And that's really nice to see. And, you know, these statements that were made about the death of classical chess and such by players in Kazan, while there may be something in it, I thought their statements were very self-serving for obvious reasons. Grischuk and Kramnik were talking about this after making a draw in 15 moves in an unclear position. What can you say? I mean, it has all got to do with the format of the event, the players who are playing, and so on.'

If one of those players is Carlsen, organizers definitely have nothing to fear or complain about. Just like great predecessors like Fischer and Kasparov, he always arrives to play for a win with both colours. His opening preparation may help him in this, but he may just as well go for a level position and try to outplay his opponent, showing in the process how incredibly difficult chess still is. He agrees that this is part of his approach. 'For example, the second game against Shirov shows that you just got to keep on playing. Sometimes your opponent makes a mistake, sometimes he doesn't. The important thing in any position is to just continue playing and try not to make any obvious mistakes myself. Just to be ready for it. Sometimes, for example against Lagrave in the second game, I almost took too many risks.'

Just like another player, Topalov, he arrives at the board ready to be there for six or seven hours. 'Yes, I think in general that's the way it has to be. Here I thought, if that's how it's going to be, then that's OK. In my first-round game against Pelletier I had a technically winning endgame after four hours. It lasted a couple of hours more, maybe two and a half, but I was not worried, you know. I just thought, this is going to

NEW IN CHESS

take time, but I am going to sit here and enjoy it.'

Of course, this maximalist approach also has a downside and a clear risk that you have to be ready to accept. 'It takes a lot of energy. I mean, you have to be really at the top. And you know, you also have to reconcile yourself to the fact that if you are going to play long games you are going to make mistakes. Of course I sometimes beat myself up because of these mistakes, but that's the way it has to be.' In Biel he felt that he overestimated his position in a few games and sometimes lost the thread in the middlegame. And against Vachier-Lagrave, in their first game, he defended 'really carelessly'. 'After 40 moves I thought it was pretty hopeless, and for the last 50 moves I was just suffering. But before that I thought he had a pleasant edge, but it shouldn't be difficult to hold. Then a few moves later I was lost, and that was really annoying (smiles).'

With his emphasis on physical fitness and appreciation of high-altitude training, one might believe that Carlsen is thinking of introducing a new aspect into professional chess: training aimed at peaking at the right moment. He sees this slightly differently. 'I don't know. Some people say that they only peak during the most important tournaments. But that may be more motivation than physical fitness. As for me, the goal has to be that you have to be on top in every game. That's not necessarily possible, but that's how it should be ideally. But it's very very hard.' When I wonder whether he discusses these matters with his manager or a psychologist, he grins and says, 'No, I just make up this nonsense myself'.

Still, it's clear that he pays a lot of attention to this aspect of his profession. 'I think that during my last few tournaments I have been more focused than before on having enough energy for the tournament. Because that was a problem both last autumn and also in Wijk aan Zee in January.' This time, when I start to say that it's his conviction that if he is physically fit and eager, he finishes my sentence with a simple: 'Then I am going to win. That's my philosophy.'

All the talk about the so-called crisis in classical chess in the wake of Kazan led to the creation of the FIDE Commission for Modernisation. Does he follow their activities with concern? 'No, I don't. I find it interesting enough to play blitz and rapid once in a while. Right now there are just still so many possibilities left for real chess...' But suppose classical chess came under threat, would he use his position as the world number one to speak out on this? 'I don't know. Of course I would give my opinion, but if things are going to change, I will just have to adapt. But I think that unless someone goes completely crazy we are not going to see the end of classical tournaments any time soon.'

> 'You also have to reconcile yourself to the fact that if you are going to play long games you are going to make mistakes.'

Carlsen has often stated that he is attached to the top spot in the world ranking. That's the position he feels entitled to and the position he wants to keep. Does he feel that this position comes with a responsibility to give his opinion on important issues? 'Well, I would not be as categorical as Garry (Kasparov) about my responsibilities. I hope that people listen to what I am saying. As for the world championship, I don't know what's going to happen, but it seems that more and more people are agreeing with the idea that it should be a round-robin rather than a knock-out tournament. But I am not going to impose my views. I do the things that I enjoy and the rest I leave to others.'

Which is not to say that he doesn't appreciate the impact his successes have, both in his own country and abroad. Shortly before Biel it became known that the Norwegian Parliament had voted to award him the prestigious Peer Gynt Prize for the year 2011. He was to receive the prize on his return home at the annual festival named after the main character of Henrik Ibsen's famous play. The Peer Gynt Prize is given a person (or institution) that has distinguished himself in a positive manner in society and has contributed to improving Norway's international reputation. With barely subdued pride he says that he feels honoured to receive the award.

Magnus Carlsen certainly is an eminent ambassador for his country, just as he remains an eminent ambassador for chess. Perhaps more than any other leading grandmaster he keeps demonstrating the vitality of classical chess by his personal approach that is based on an unwavering curiosity about the unresolved mysteries of the game and a deep wish to actually play and wage combat on the board.

Like anyone else he uses engines as analytical tools, but more than others, he also keeps relying on his own phenomenal talent to assess positions. He himself prefers to call it a bit of both. 'It varies. It was interesting to read Lagrave's article on computer chess in New In Chess (2011/5). I knew some of it, but certainly not all of it. Sometimes it's interesting to play through these computer lines. Like today (in the game against Caruana) I played something around move 10 to 12 that I knew the computer recommends. At first I thought (with a disgusted face), I cannot play like this! No. But then I thought, what the... and I played it as confidently as I could.'

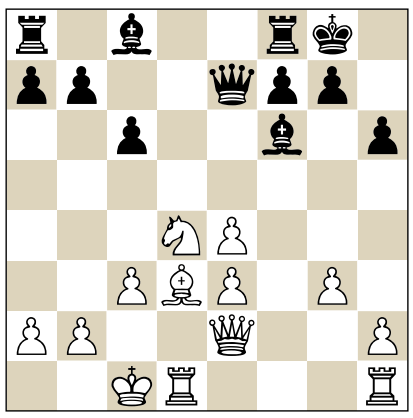
When he prepares, he usually sits at his computer and is not averse to consulting engines. But he may also analyse or consider positions in his head – wherever he is. While he is sitting somewhere, or during a walk in the mountains around Zermatt. 'Yes, I actually did that a couple of times, but I didn't get to use any of those ideas here.' (DJtG)

21...c6?!

21...♗g4 is not that appealing, as White can immediately challenge my bishop with 22.h3. This is the key difference between long and short castling: 22...♗xf3 23.♕xf3, and with the bishop coming to c4, White can look to the future with confidence.

However, 21...a6 was very interesting. Unfortunately, I didn't notice this idea until the next move, when I had already wasted a move on ...c6: 22.♗c2 (the best – 22.♘d4 c5 23.♘f5 ♗xf5 24.exf5 b5 is the key idea. White cannot activate his bishop, and Black has an easy attack on the queenside) 22...♖b8! (bad is 22...b5? 23.e5 ♗xe5 24.♕d3 g6 25.♕e4, and Black loses a piece), and Black has the initiative.

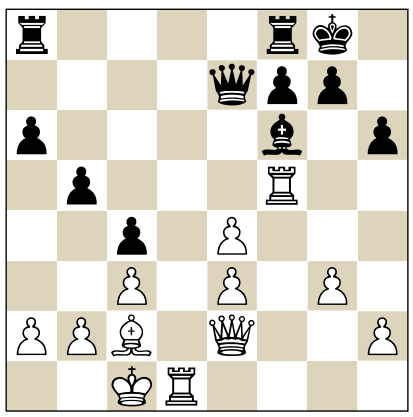
22.♘d4



22...a6 This is the best move, despite the wasted tempo.

22...g6 was my intention, but then I noticed 23.♖hf1 ♗g7 24.♗c4, and due to a little trick White manages to activate his bishop, which is what I have to avoid at any cost: 24...♕xe4 25.♖f4 ♕e7 26.♖df1, and it's clear that Black has wasted too much time.

23.♖hf1 c5 24.♘f5 ♗xf5 25.♖xf5 b5 26.♗c2 c4

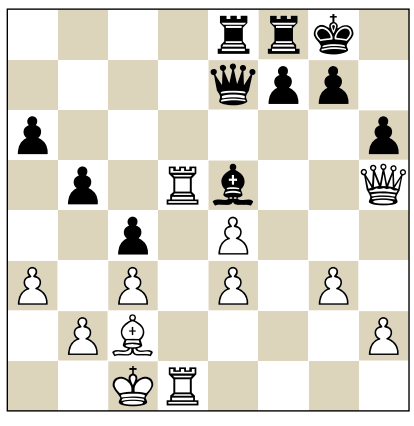


I've managed to execute my plan, and his bishop will now remain passive for a long time. On the other hand, White has activated his rooks, and is after all a pawn up, so the position is probably balanced.

27.♖fd5 ♗e5

In combination with my next move this move makes a slightly awkward impression. However, I felt that it was very important to cover the d6-square in order to keep my queen from being constantly harassed by ♖d7, ♖d6, and so on.

28.♕h5 ♖ae8 29.a3



29...♕a7

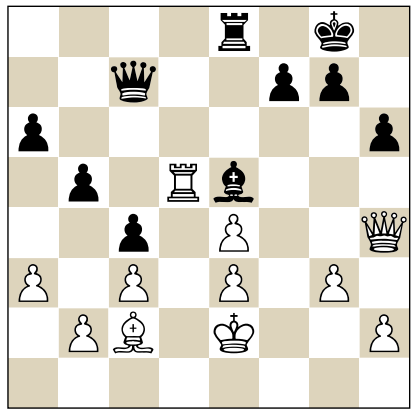
Utilizing a simple tactical trick to put my queen on the excellent b8-square, where it supports the a5-b4 break. I was very optimistic at this point, but his next move dispelled my illusions. It is worthwhile to mention that if my pawn was still on h7 my prospects would have been drastically improved, as I would be able to kick his queen with ...g6.

The alternative 29...♗xc3 30.bxc3 ♕xa3+ 31.♔d2 b4 32.cxb4 ♕xb4+ 33.♔e2 ♕b2 34.♔d2 ♕b4+, with a draw, did not really tempt me, especially as I only saw it after I had played 29...♕a7.

30.♔d2

I had simply missed this idea. By transferring the king to e2, White takes the sting out of the ...a5-b4 idea. Bad was 30.♖xe5? ♕xe3+ 31.♔b1 g6 32.♖xe8 gxh5 33.♖e5 ♕e2, and White has a difficult defensive task ahead. This was obviously not what my opponent was aiming for.

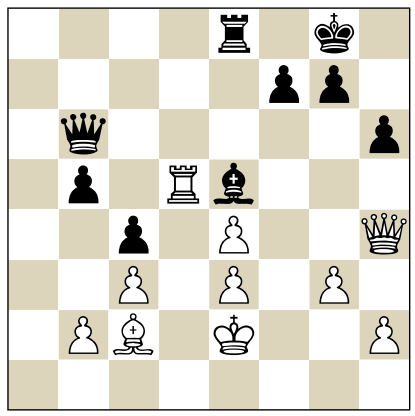
30...♕b8 31.♔e2 ♖e6 32.♕h4 ♕b6 33.♖d8 ♖ee8 34.♖xe8 ♖xe8 35.♖d5 ♕c7



36.a4

A committal move, but far from a bad one. White could just have stayed put, of course, when it's hard for either side to undertake any active operations.

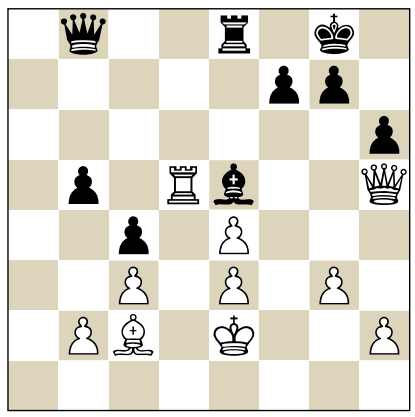
36...♕b6 37.axb5 axb5



38.♕h5

The immediate 38.♖d7 was the best move as far as I could see. It's hard to find a convenient way for Black to avoid the rook swap, when there will not be much left to fight for: 38...♕e6 39.♖d8 ♔h7 40.♖xe8 ♕xe8.

38...♕b8



39.♖d7?!

After a protracted fight, Magnus Carlsen also won his second game against Alexey Shirov. 'The important thing in any position is to just continue playing and try not to make any obvious mistakes myself.'

This was not necessary at all. Shirov was probably prompted by the fact that we were both short on time here, but my next move is pretty obvious, as with the white queen misplaced on the kingside the ...b4-break will considerably grow in strength.

39...g6 40.♕f3

40.♕xh6 b4 looks pretty dangerous for White, and not really worth the risk, since the text keeps White well within the drawing zone.

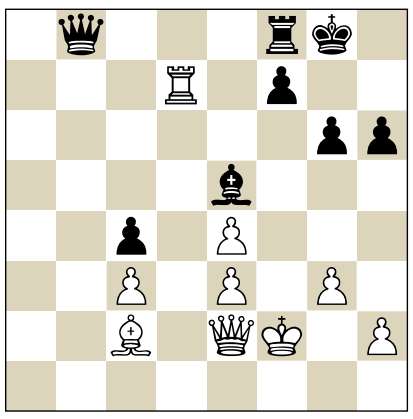
40...♖f8

Now there is no way to stop ...b4.

41.♔f2

If 41.♖d5 b4 42.cxb4 ♕xb4! 43.♖xe5 ♕xb2.

41...b4 42.♕e2 bxc3 43.bxc3



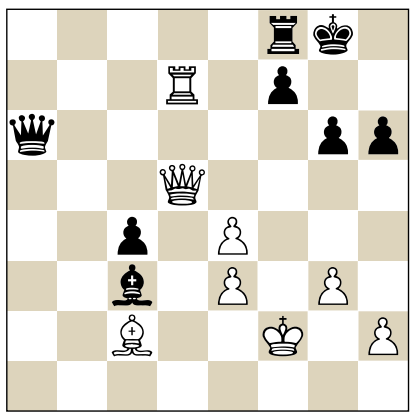
43...♕c8

43...♕b2 was an interesting attempt: 44.♗d3 ♕a1 (unfortunately, I had missed this cunning idea; 44...♕b5 45.♖d5 cxd3 46.♖xb5 dxe2 47.♖xe5 ♖c8 should also be a draw) 45.♗xc4 ♕h1 46.♕g4! ♕xh2+ 47.♔f3, and there is no win for Black: 47...♕h1+ (or 47...♔g7 48.♖xf7+ ♖xf7+ 49.♗xf7 ♔xf7 50.♕d7+, with a draw) 48.♔f2 ♖b8 49.♗xf7+ ♔f8 50.♗b3 ♕h2+ 51.♔f1.

44.♕d2 ♗xc3 45.♕d5 ♕a6

I saw that this would lead to a draw more or less by force, but there was nothing better anyway.

45...♗g7 46.e5 c3 47.♔g2, and White is too active for Black to hope for anything real.



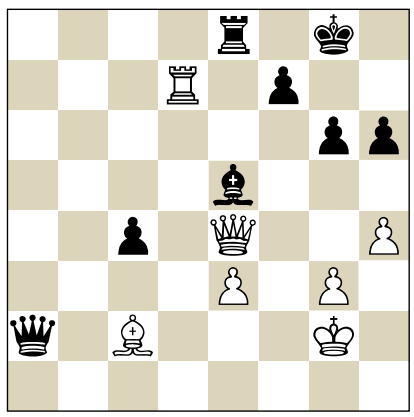
46.e5?

46.♗d1! was White's last chance to maintain equality: 46...♕f6+ 47.♔g2 ♖b8 (or 47...♖c8 48.♗e2 ♕e6 49.♖d8+ ♖xd8 50.♕xd8+ ♔g7 51.♕d5, with a draw) 48.♕xc4 ♖b2+ 49.♗e2 ♗e1 50.♔h3, and Black has nothing, as 50...♕f2? even loses: 51.♖d8+ ♔h7 52.♕d4.

46...♕a2 47.♕e4 ♗xe5

Now it's very difficult for White.

48.h4 ♖e8 49.♔g2



49...h5!

I hit on this move by elimination after a long think.

49...♖e6? was my main idea, and I rejected it for the wrong reasons: 50.♖d8+ ♔g7 51.♖a8! (if 51.♖d7 h5 52.g4 hxg4 53.h5 ♔h6 – 53...♗d6 54.♕xe6 ♕xc2+ actually wins by force, but since there was a serious flaw in my calculations even earlier in this line, let's focus on what I actually saw... – 54.♖xf7 ♔xh5 55.♖h7+ – 55.♖f5+ ♔h4, and the king march might actually end victoriously – 55...♔g5 56.♖g7! ♗xg7 57.♕f4+ ♔h5 58.♕h2+, with a draw) 51...♕b2 52.♕xc4, with an edge for Black.

49...♕a8 is another option I considered, but I didn't like 50.♖b7, when my queen is clearly misplaced.

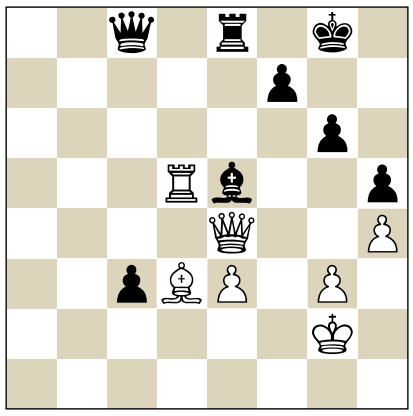
50.♔h3

Now the rest is fairly easy. The key move I had to calculate was 50.g4 hxg4 51.h5 ♕a8 52.hxg6 fxg6! 53.♖b7 (53.♖d5 ♗g7 54.♕xc4 ♖c8 and the pins work out in Black's favour: 55.♕b3 ♖xc2+ 56.♔g1 ♕a2) 53...♔f8! with ...♖e7 to come, and Black is winning.

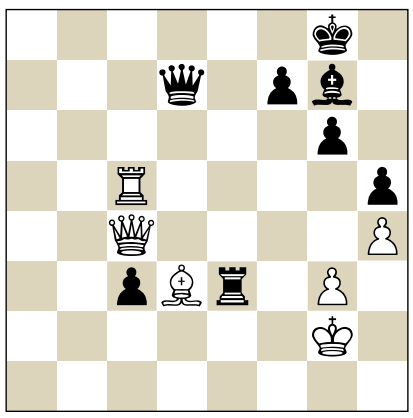
50...c3 51.♖d5 ♕a6

The cleanest way.

52.♗d3
52.♖xe5 ♕f1+ 53.♔h2 ♖xe5 54.♕xe5 ♕f2+ 55.♔h3 ♕xc2 is easily winning for Black, of course.
52...♕c8+ 53.♔g2



53...♗g7
Of course, 53...♗xg3 was eminently playable, but for the safety of my king I did not want to remove the bishop from the long diagonal. Besides, I had not seen his next move, and thought he would resign after the text.
54.♖c5 ♕d7 55.♕c4
55.♕d5 ♕xd5+ 56.♖xd5 ♖xe3 would have prolonged the fight, but without changing the outcome.
55...♖xe3

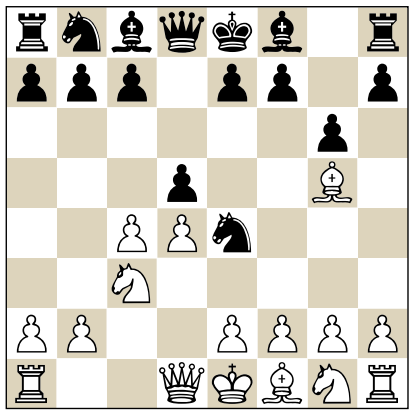


56.♖c7 Also quite simple was 56.♗xg6 ♗e5 57.♖d5 ♕e6 (57...♖xg3+ 58.♔f2 ♕a7+ wins immediately, but such 'distant' moves are hard to spot).
56...♖xg3+ 57.♔xg3
57.♔f2 ♗d4+ would only prevent White from transposing to the game, as 58.♔xg3 ♕g4+ etc. mates.
57...♗e5+ 58.♔f2 ♕xc7 59.♕xc7 ♗xc7 60.♔f3
Shirov made the time-control with one second left, but understandably decided not to continue the fight.

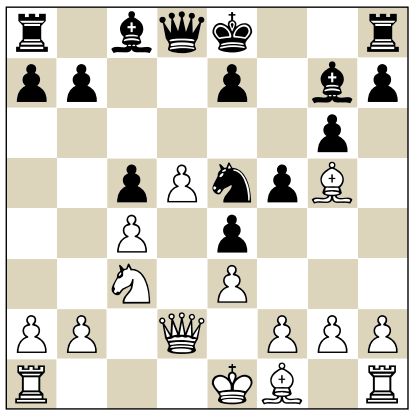
NOTES BY
Alexander Morozevich

GI 3.5 – D80
Alexander Morozevich
Magnus Carlsen
Biel 2011 (3)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 The expected choice. **4.♗g5 ♘e4**

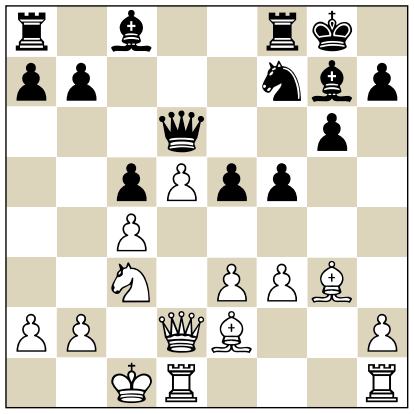


5.♘xe4 A variation which is deservedly not rated very highly. I was happy, assuming that I had lured my opponent into a variation which I knew well, and he almost certainly did not.
5...dxe4 6.♕d2 ♗g7 7.e3 c5 8.d5 ♘d7 9.♘e2 ♘e5 10.♘c3 f5

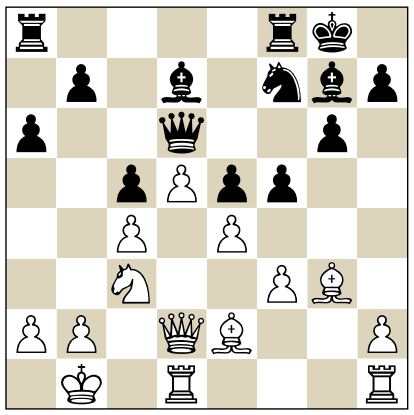


Usually Black places his bishop on f5 and somewhere earlier brings out his queen to b6. By avoiding making these unnecessary moves, by simple means Black has gained the advantage – White has no sensible plan.
11.♗e2 ♘f7 12.♗h4 0-0 13.f3
After any other move Black plays 13...g5 14.♗g3 e5, either forcing the en passant capture 15.dxe6, or shutting in the bishop at h2, neither of which appealed to me.

13...exf3 14.gxf3 ♕d6
The choice of good moves is too great.
15.♗g3 e5 16.0-0-0



The white king will not find peace anywhere. I decided to place it on b1, shut in the g7 bishop by e3-e4, and conduct a courageous but most probably hopeless defence after Black's ...b7-b5.
16...♗d7
It was slightly more accurate to begin with 16...a6 17.♔b1 b5, and here after 18.cxb5 axb5 19.♗xb5 ♕b6 White is unlikely to survive, whatever plus the computer promises him, while after 18.e4 b4 19.♘a4 ♗d7 his survival chances are better, but not much.
17.♔b1 a6 18.e4



18...f4
That which is given for free is rarely valued. The opponent was tired of playing with an advantage and he decided to level the position – now, with the centre closed, the thematic ...b7-b5 is far less dangerous.
After 18...b5 he was concerned about the possible 19.exf5 gxf5 20.♖dg1, but White is unable to create any threats, whereas after ...e5-e4 the possibility of including the g7 bishop in the attack

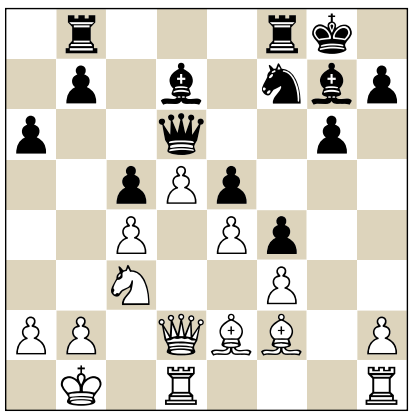
An inspired comeback after the crisis of 2010. In the course of three tournaments Alexander Morozevich has already regained an impressive 43 rating points.

is significant. And although computers give various degrees of advantage to White, I would venture to express my opinion and put it somewhere between ∓ and ∓.

19.♗f2 White has not stood so well since the 5th move.

19...♖ab8

19...b5 20.♖c1 would probably have transposed, whereas now White has the additional possibility of playing 20.a4, forcing Black to consider whether or not to play ...b7-b5 at all. On the other hand, during the game I did not consider ...b7-b5 to be so dangerous, and I thought that it would also give me some play. Therefore I did not succumb to the provocation (20.a4).

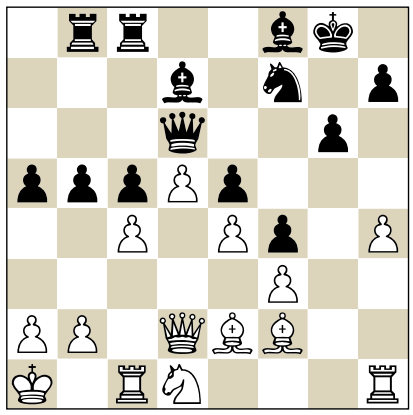


20.h4

This is a defensive move, not an offensive one!

20...b5 21.♖c1 ♖fc8 22.♔a1 ♗f8 23.♘d1 After 23.♘b1 b4 the white knight has altogether no route from d2, whereas after 23.♘d1 b4 it can go to d3, the bishop will be exchanged via h3, and so on.

23...a5 A surprising move, but it is possible that Magnus very much wanted to play, and he did not see any other option.



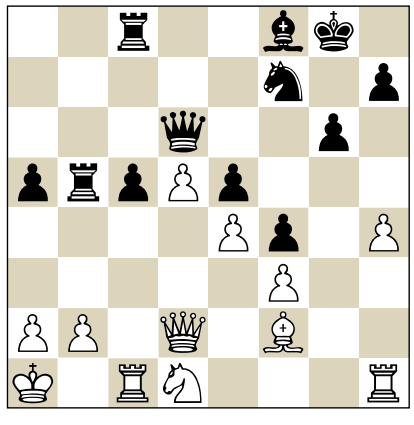
24.cxb5

This involves an incorrect assessment of the position after 26.b3, rather than an answering desire to play at 'any' price.

With 24.♘c3 White would probably have forced 24...b4, since it is dangerous to play 24...bxc4 25.♘b1 ♕b6 26.♘a3 ♘d6 27.♘xc4 ♘xc4 28.♗xc4, with a clear plus for White.

After 24...b4 both the backward 25.♘d1 intending ♗e1 and ♘d1-f2-d3, and the forward 25.♘b5 intending a4 would have led to a very blocked, most probably drawn position, without any risk for White.

24...♗xb5 25.♗xb5 ♖xb5



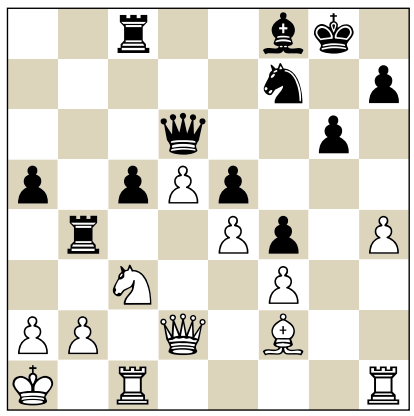
26.♘c3

Not the best route for the knight. On the 24th move I had been intending here 26.b3 a4 (otherwise 27.♘b2, and Black's activity is severely restricted) 27.♘c3 ♖bb8 28.♘xa4 c4! 29.♖xc4 ♖xc4 30.bxc4 ♕a3, and I assumed that I would 'somehow' repel the attack and retain the extra material. But when I checked the calculation, I did not see this 'somehow': 31.♘c3 ♘d6 32.c5 ♘c4 33.♕c1 ♗xc5, and everything is unclear.

Stronger is 28.bxa4 c4 29.♖b1 ♕a3, but here too it is not easy to demonstrate any advantage for White, and despite the absence of direct threats Black has good long-term compensation.

It was possible to begin with 26.♕e2, in order after ...♖b4 to have the tempo-gaining ♗e1, but it is unclear whether in principle this changes anything: 26...♖b7 27.♘c3 c4 28.♘b1 ♕a6 29.♖c2 a4 30.a3 ♘d6 31.♖hc1 ♖b5 etc.

26...♖b4



Biel 2011 — **cat. XIX**

				1	2	3	4	5	6		TPR
1 Magnus Carlsen	IGM	NOR	2821	* *	½ ½	0 ½	1 1	1 ½	1 1	19	2835
2 Alexander Morozevich	IGM	RUS	2694	½ ½	* *	1 1	½ ½	1 0	½ 1	17	2821
3 Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	IGM	FRA	2722	1 ½	0 0	* *	½ ½	½ ½	½ 1	12	2706
4 Alexey Shirov	IGM	ESP	2714	0 0	½ ½	½ ½	* *	1 1	½ ½	12	2707
5 Fabiano Caruana	IGM	ITA	2711	0 ½	0 1	½ ½	0 0	* *	½ 1	10	2636
6 Yannick Pelletier	IGM	SUI	2590	0 0	½ 0	½ 0	½ ½	½ 0	* *	5	2539

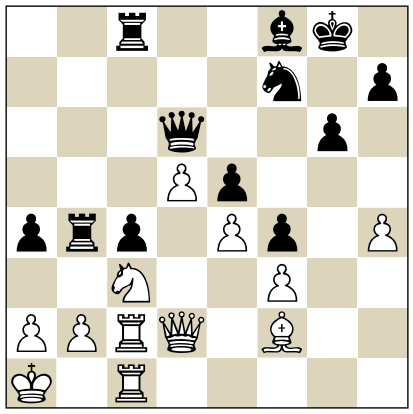
3 points for a win, 1 for a draw, 0 for a loss

27.♖c2

27.♘b1 and 27.♕e2 are other sensible moves, but they do not appear any stronger than the move in the game.

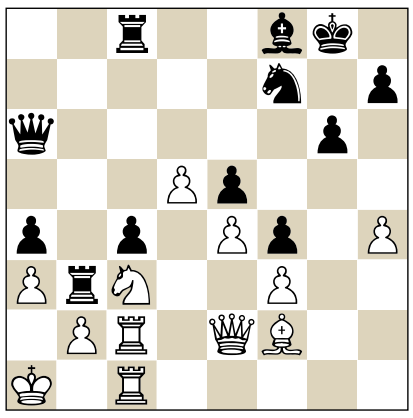
It would have been interesting to try activating the knight: 27.a3 ♖b3 28.♘a4 c4 29.♖c3 (the point) 29...♕a6 30.♕c2 (30.♖hc1 is a blunder in view of 30...♗b4; 30.♕e2 ♖xc3 31.♘xc3) 30...♖cb8 31.♖c1 (31.♖xc4 ♗xa3) 31...♕b5 32.♖xb3 ♕xb3 33.♕xb3 ♖xb3 34.♖c3 g5 and who stands better in the endgame? Most probably Black.

27...c4 28.♖hc1 a4



29.a3 A questionable move – 'smoking out' the rook from b3 will be problematic, but if 29.♘b1 all the same there follows 29...a3 30.♘xa3 ♕a6 with strong pressure.

29...♖b3 30.♕e2 ♕a6

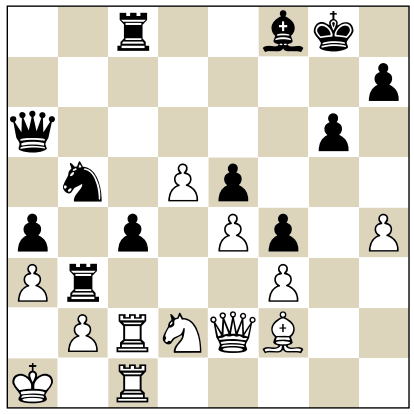


31.♘b1

This is not such a serious mistake as I thought immediately after the game, but, in view of the fact that the knight manoeuvre to d2 does not drive away the rook, another route should have been considered: 31.♘a2!? ♖cb8 32.♗e1, leading to a position which is not easy to assess and to play, for example 32...h5!? 33.♗c3 ♔h7.

31...♘d6 32.♘d2 ♘b5

This move, which I thought was not possible, was nevertheless made instantly on the board.

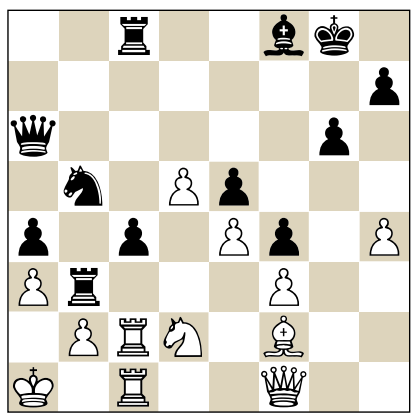


33.d6

The anticipated panic and a serious mistake. Two other moves were significantly better:

A) 33.♘xc4 ♘d6 (33...♘d4 34.♗xd4 exd4 35.♖d1 – during the game this seemed very dangerous, but the computer calmly gives +–) 34.♕f1 ♘xc4 35.♖xc4 ♖xc4 36.♕xc4 ♕xc4 37.♖xc4 ♖xf3 38.♗b6, and the endgame is most probably drawn;

B) 33.♕f1 – a move which I saw, but considered bad because of 33...c3. However, after 34.♖xc3 ♖cxc3 35.♖xc3 ♖xc3 36.bxc3 ♕a5 37.♕c4 White definitely has nothing to fear. Black has two other dangerous moves, but it would appear that White can hold on:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

B1) 33...♘xa3 34.bxa3 ♗xa3 35.♖xc4 ♗xc1 36.♕xc1 ♖xc4 37.♕xc4 ♕xc4 38.♘xc4 ♖xf3 39.♗a7 with a draw;

B2) 33...♗xa3 34.bxa3 c3 35.♘b1 ♕d6 36.♕h3 ♖e8 37.♖a2 ♘xa3 38.♘xc3 ♕b4 (38...♔h8!? with an absolutely equal game) 39.♗e1 ♔f8, and here three of the seven possible rook moves along the second rank give equality. But intuitively I decided against playing 33.♕f1.

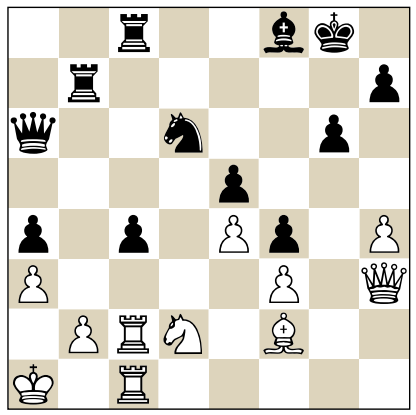
33...♘xd6

White is essentially a pawn down, without any real compensation.

34.♕f1 ♖b7

A safe move. After 34...♖d3 35.♘xc4 ♖xf3 36.♕d1 ♘xc4 37.♕xf3 ♘d2 38.♕h3 ♖xc2 39.♖xc2 ♘xe4 40.♕f3 ♘f6 41.♗c5 White has good practical drawing chances.

35.♕h3



35...♖e8

A blunder out of nothing.

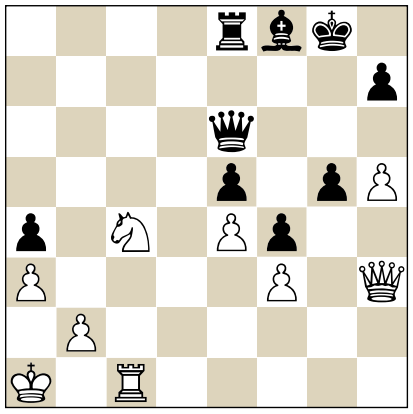
The simple 35...c3 would have given an obvious, almost decisive advantage. 35...♖c6 would have extinguished all

the threats and crudely retained the extra pawn – 36.h5 g5 37.♕e6+ ♘f7 38.♕d5 ♖b5 39.♕d7 c3 40.♖xc3 ♖d6 41.♕f5 ♖xb2! and in this variation Black is altogether winning.

36.h5 g5

Here the shedding of the pawn would not have given anything – 36...c3 37.♖xc3 ♕e2 38.♗e1.

37.♗c5 ♖c7 38.♗xd6 ♕xd6 39.♖xc4 ♖xc4 40.♘xc4 ♕e6



The time control has been reached; Black is a little better, but White should be able to hold the position. Especially if the ill-starred knight either arrives at d5, or captures something.

41.♕g2 The exchange of either of the heavy pieces is to Black's advantage.

41...♗e7

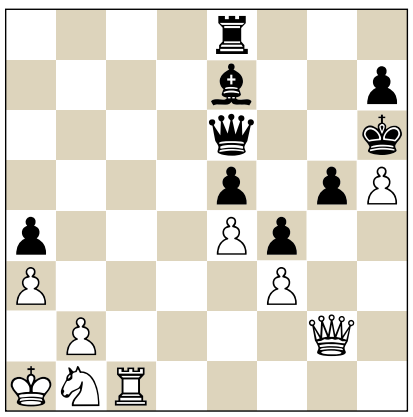
After 41...♖c8 42.♕xg5+ ♔h8 43.♔b1 ♖xc4 44.♖xc4 ♕xc4 45.♕xe5+ ♗g7 46.♕e8+ ♕g8 47.♕xa4 it is most probably a draw.

41...h6? would have taken away the important h6-square and blocked in the black king.

42.♘d2 ♔g7 43.♘b1

A difficult move. 43.♖c7 ♔h6 44.♕g4 with roughly equal play.

43...♔h6



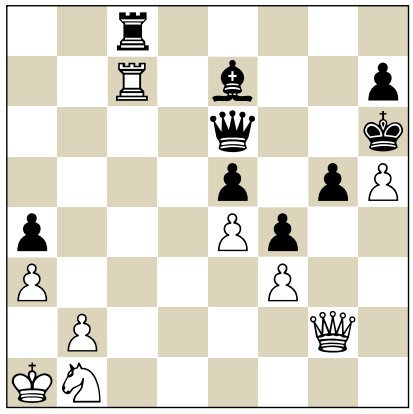
44.♖c7

But this is weak and inconsistent.

If 44.♘c3 I did not like 44...♖c8, when it is hard for the knight to reach d5 in comfort.

I should have begun with 44.♕c2!, and after 44...♔xh5 45.♕xa4 ♖c8 46.♖h1+ ♔g6 47.♘c3 (only now) 47...h5 48.♘d5 ♗f8 in my view Black is better, but much play still lies ahead.

44...♖c8

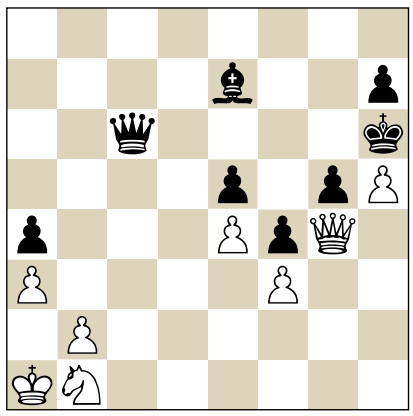


45.♖xc8

Forced. 45.♖b7 ♗c5 and it is most probably Black who will give mate, not White.

45...♕xc8 46.♕g4 ♕c4

Black did not have such a great choice, which makes it all the more strange that Magnus missed the strongest move 46...♕c6!, when White is on the edge of the precipice:

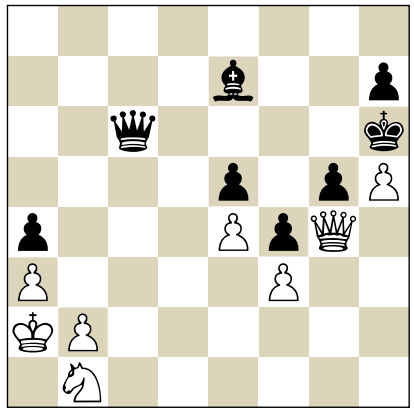


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 47.♘c3 ♗xa3 48.♕f5 ♗c5 49.♕xe5?! ♗f8! and wins;

B) 47.♕f5 (this is what I was intending to play) 47...♗c5 48.♕xe5 and here the overlooked 48...♕b6! is very strong – 49.♕c3 ♗d4 50.♕c1 ♔xh5 51.♘d2 ♔g6 and Black should win;

C) 47.♔a2. The only move! Now Black has a wide array of tempting choices, but there is no simple and clear-cut win:



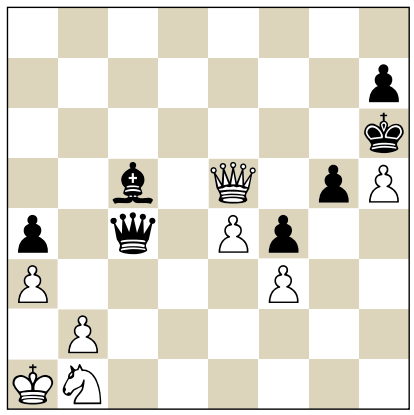
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

C1) 47...♕c4+ 48.♔a1, and even with the gain of a tempo this gives Black little after 48...♕f7 49.♘c3;

C2) 47...♕b6 48.♘d2 ♗c5 49.♕c8 ♗d4 50.b4 axb3+ 51.♘xb3 ♗g1 52.♘d2 ♕c5 53.♕e6+ ♔xh5 54.♕h3+ ♔g6 55.♕f5+ ♔h6 56.♕h3+ ♔g7 57.♕d7+ ♔f8 58.♕f5+ ♔e8 59.♕e6+ ♕e7 60.♕g8+ ♔d7 61.♕d5+ ♔c7 62.♘c4 ♗d4 – Black has the advantage, but it is very difficult to win;

C3) 47...♗c5 48.♘c3 ♗d4 49.♘d5 ♕c4+ 50.♔b1 ♕d3+ 51.♔c1 ♗e3+ 52.♘xe3 ♕xe3+ 53.♔b1 ♕d3+ 54.♔a1 ♕f1+ 55.♔a2 ♕c4+ 56.♔a1 ♕f7 57.♔b1 ♕xh5 58.♕e6+ ♕g6 59.♕xe5 ♕a6 with a slight advantage for Black.

47.♕f5 ♗c5 48.♕xe5



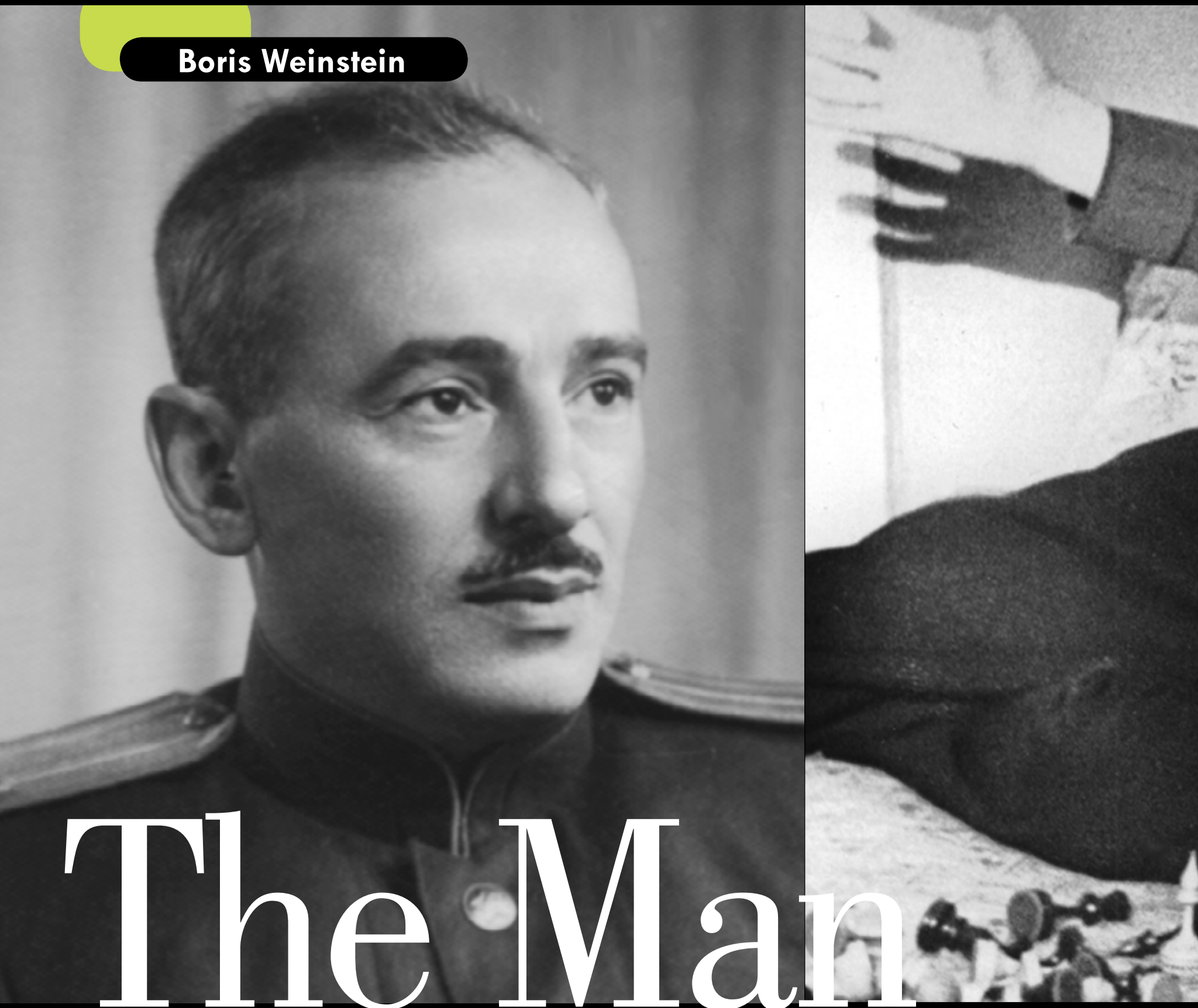
Now a draw is inevitable.

48...♗d4 49.♕d6+ ♔xh5 50.♕d7

Perpetual check cannot be avoided.

50...♔g6 51.♕f5+ ♔h6 52.♕h3+ ♔g7 Draw. ■

Boris Weinstein



The Man Behind the Curtain

Genna Sosonko

‘A Jewish intellectual, a non-party member, with a dubious bourgeois background, Boris Weinstein held a high position in the Ministry of Internal Affairs – a rare combination.’

‘Everybody loves this book, and I can’t stand it. Write it down – I can’t stand it! I haven’t told anyone this before, you’re the first. The book is being reprinted, it’s coming out in other languages, but I myself have been relegated to the fringe of chess life...’ That’s what David Ionovich Bronstein said to me about his famous book *Zurich International Chess Tournament 1953*. By the admission of Bronstein, whose name is on the cover, the entire literary part, as well as the idea itself of writing the book, which to this day is one of many people’s favourites, belonged to Boris Samoilovich Weinstein. Bronstein recalled that he had offered to publish the book under both names, but Weinstein refused.

Boris Weinstein

Among his close friends Botvinnik called Bronstein Bronswine and Weinstein Stinkstein: Bronswine and Stinkstein. 'He was a terrible person, just awful, he hated me,' Botvinnik said of Weinstein. He called him Bronstein's evil genius, repeating that Weinstein 'didn't want me to become world champion and used all his connections to interfere with the negotiations with Alekhine.'

So, who was Boris Samoilovich Weinstein, without whom the star of a challenger for the World Championship and one of the most original chess players of the last century might never have ascended? He was born in 1907 in Odessa, where he spent his childhood. Little Borya learnt to read at the age of three, completed school at 14 and entered the university's faculty of mechanics and mathematics. But by then he was in Tashkent, where the family of former factory owners and sugar manufacturers had sensibly moved to after the revolution. Social origins had become virtually the most important factor in the eyes of the new regime, and the Weinsteins were too high-profile in Odessa. The idea was obvious – don't attract attention, sit it out, wait, and vanish in the vastness of the enormous country.

The Kiev master Duz-Khotimirsky was also in Tashkent at the time, and Boris established very warm relations with him. It wasn't only words from the specific chess jargon the maestro used that remained in Weinstein's lexicon from those years in Tashkent, but also spicy eastern expressions. Many years later Weinstein gave the title 'Inshallah!' – 'God willing!' to an article dedicated to his own 80th birthday.

In the mid- and late twenties Weinstein's name could be found in the pages of chess publications fairly often. He liked being noticed: the young Boris Weinstein headed the Central Asian Chess Section that he had created, and travelled to Moscow and Leningrad.

When Weinstein led the national federation 15 years later he was always in conflict with Botvinnik, and the future world champion was no fan of Weinstein either. It's very possible that the source of the hostility had something to do with that time when the first-category player Weinstein faced Botvinnik in a match between the Uzbekistan and Leningrad student teams. The game between them remained unfinished in the endgame, where Botvinnik had two pawns for a piece. Duz-Khotimirsky, who adjudicated the game, hardly glancing at the board, determined the result: 'What is there to look at here – he's a piece up...'

Botvinnik tried to prove that it wasn't all that simple, and in his analysis he managed to take the game to a draw a couple of times. Duz-Khotimirsky announced that he would recuse himself from adjudicating: everyone knew that Boris was his friend. When a draw was eventually decreed Weinstein exploded at his opponent: 'I see that if I'd played on I probably would have lost this game altogether...' Two years later Botvinnik became champion of the country and the leader of Soviet chess, but he didn't forget that game, as he never forgot anything.

After graduating from university Weinstein taught for a while, served in the army, was sent to participate in the construction of the Baikal-Amur railway, and worked as a low-level economist at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (then called the NKVD, the forerunner to the KGB). He was discovered very quickly, summoned to Moscow and promoted to higher posts. By the age of 32 (1939) Boris Weinstein headed the planning department of the ministry's Main Directorate of Capital Construction, where he was assigned after a big purge of the state security agencies.

In the post-Soviet era, dissociating himself from the stigma of the sinister organization, Weinstein emphasized: 'If Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria (Beria – 1899-1953 – was a Soviet minister of the interior, i.e. chief of the secret police, and part of Stalin's inner circle. He was executed by a firing squad shortly after Stalin's death – ed.) did value me, it was as a person who had the ability to synthesize ideas and develop programmes, and he didn't allow me to take part in operations.' However, so that people wouldn't think that he was only a bit-part player, Weinstein immediately added the caveat: 'At Dynamo we didn't make a distinction between those who were in operations and those like me, an economist.'

From 1942 to 1945 NKVD Colonel Weinstein headed the Soviet chess section. In response to a request to help Paul Keres after the Red Army invaded Tallinn in 1944, Weinstein declared decisively that he couldn't do anything: according to the law, for collaboration with the Germans the Estonian grandmaster should have been sentenced to 25 years in a camp. The reason why Weinstein resigned was the conflict that arose between him and Botvinnik over the question of a World Championship match.

Weinstein recalled: 'Botvinnik had been thinking about a match with Alekhine since 1936. And in 1943, at a critical point in the war, he returned to this idea again. When he visited me he raised the issue of the match, and I told him that this match was impossible. When Botvinnik raised the issue of the match again at a meeting of the chess section, I asked him directly, "Mikhail Moiseevich, I'm not a party man, but you're a Communist, and we're both ethnically Jewish. And I don't understand, how are you going to shake hands with someone who's up to his neck in the blood of Communists and Jews?" '

Weinstein's position was regarded by Botvinnik as a personal attack on him: Weinstein was standing in the way of his great aim, so he remained Botvinnik's arch-enemy to the end, and his patronage and unconditional support for Bronstein when he became a challenger for the World Championship only exacerbated that exceptionally hostile relationship.

Boris Weinstein studies the board while David Bronstein pours himself a drink. After Bronstein had moved to Moscow he lived for a long time in the flat of the man who became his mentor and protector.

After the vote and a revote the resolution to hold an Alekhine-Botvinnik match passed by one vote, and Weinstein immediately resigned. The decisive factor was that a group of party members had met separately to discuss the issue, but Weinstein wasn't a party member. After *perestroika* he recalled that there were only two non-party members in the department he headed – himself and a typist. He explained: 'This was the ruling party, and I didn't consider it possible to take on the responsibility for governing the country. I'm not trying to portray myself as some kind of dissident, in my actions I always stuck to the party line, but I joined the party later, after Stalin's death.'

It's difficult to comment on his arrogant words about responsibility for governing the country and about the ruling party, as if there were other parties back then in the Soviet Union, but they say quite a lot about the man himself. Weinstein remained chairman of a small section in the Dynamo sport organization, but he never held any other positions in Soviet chess, limiting himself to mentoring Bronstein and writing chess books.

Despite Bronstein's incredible talent, his chess path might have unfolded differently if he hadn't acquired such a powerful patron in his younger years. When the chairman of the Soviet chess section, the deputy head of the Main Directorate of Defence Construction in the Ministry of Defence of the USSR, Boris Weinstein, found himself in Stalingrad during the war, he saw an absolutely wretched, half-starved, shabbily dressed young man who was crazy about chess and spent his nights writing analyses of the King's Gambit on scraps of wallpaper. Recognizing his mighty talent, Weinstein obtained a transfer to Moscow for Bronstein and became his mentor and protector. After the move Bronstein lived in his patron's flat for a long time and enjoyed his unconditional benevolence.

Although Weinstein himself, recalling that time, modestly remarked, 'I didn't do all that much for him. Merely fed him, using my position, when there was a rationing system', that was just a fraction of what the future challenger for the World Championship was indebted to his patron for: Weinstein not only gave every kind of help to Devik, as everyone called the young Bronstein, but also ran his life.

Trips abroad at that time depended on the absolute purity of your application. England, Sweden, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, the USA. What the list of countries visited in the post-war years by David Bronstein, the non-party Jew with relatives abroad and a father who was imprisoned as an 'enemy of the people', means can only be understood by a person who lived in the Soviet Union back then. I don't exclude the possibility that after Bronstein had filled in the multiple-page applications and had interviews at every level his last stop was Weinstein, who had staked his life on the young grandmaster.

Among the wide variety of types that could be encountered in the enormous, disparate empire, Boris Weinstein belonged to one of the less common ones. A Jewish intellectual, a non-party member, with a dubious bourgeois background, he held a high position in the Ministry of Internal Affairs – a rare combination. The smile hardly ever left his face. Tall, lean and well-groomed, with a very elegant manner of speaking, he produced the impression of an aristocrat. Full of scepticism and irony, intolerant of other people's points of view, he nevertheless did not provoke distaste: his wit and erudition outweighed everything else.

A gambling man, he was a frequent visitor to the racecourse, where famous footballers, lawyers, journalists, actors and representatives of Moscow's bohemians and semi-bohemians of the time looked in. Although he wrote about cards with contempt, he liked to spend the odd evening at the poker table. A talented organizer and independent thinker – in those days that in itself was risky. But if circumstances demanded it, he was able to wisely, 'professionally', stay silent. He understood what to say and when, trimming his sails

to the wind. What else: without those qualities it would have been impossible to work where he worked. When Alekhine was rehabilitated he quickly forgot what he'd said about him and was the first to transfer money to the account for a memorial to the world champion in Paris.

He was very reserved, didn't get close to anyone, but rather imitated closeness. Buttoned-up, staying very solitary, he addressed everyone with the formal 'you' and their name and patronymic. He appeared at the Central Chess Club and in chess circles extremely rarely: employees of the magazines *Shakhmaty v SSSR* and *64* recall seeing him at the club on Gogol Boulevard only a handful of times in the post-war decades.

An inveterate theatre-goer, a lover of and connoisseur of music (his first wife was the famous conductor Veronika Dudarova), a gallant gentleman and ladies' man, he was unfailingly courteous. He had a reputation as a widely-educated and well-read man. The few people who visited his home recall a huge library, on the shelves of which there were books in various languages.

Those who knew Weinstein personally inevitably came under the spell of his charm, and many asserted that even if a person worked 'there', lifting their eyes to the ceiling, that still didn't tell you anything. Especially as 'there' he was only the head of the planning department. Many people believed that he only worked 'there', but in reality he lived a different life.

I don't think that Boris Weinstein, serving that malevolent master, was only playing a role at work, while 'in reality' he was a fan of chess, concerts and horseracing: the most diverse qualities can combine perfectly in a person without coming into conflict with each other. Weinstein could discuss the nuances of a Dostoevsky novel, the soft smile of Alyosha Karamazov and his brother Ivan's polemic with the devil, after which he would calmly go off to the institution where the devil was having a ball.

Yuri Averbakh recalls that 'Weinstein's personality was uncommon rather than exceptional. The books he wrote weren't bad, but the same idea runs through all of them – we're smart, but you, alas...' This corresponds with reality – on almost every page of Weinstein's books the message comes across loud and clear: I may not be a grandmaster or even a master, but I wasn't born yesterday either, and I might be a little stronger than some grandmasters, certainly in terms of my understanding of the game.

This image that he created seems to be confirmed by the facts – one player at the Candidates' tournament in Budapest (1950) had grandmaster Bondarevsky as his second, another had grandmaster Averbakh, a third had international master Sokolsky, a fourth Simagin, but Bronstein had the somewhat mysterious Weinstein, apparently not even a candidate master, but with enough understanding of the game that grandmasters took his opinion seriously. Weinstein wrote: 'As for me, as a practical player I'm ridiculously weak, and I'm well aware of it. But I know a thing or two about analysis and openings, and Bronstein knows that.'

After an improvised survey of the participants in the Candidates' tournament, Weinstein was declared the best second. The witty Najdorf gave the explanation: 'Boris is the only second who doesn't think that he plays better than his man.' Even if that was the case, it wasn't without provisos. 'Bronstein's job is to sleep at night, go for a walk in the morning, and get a winning position at the board in the afternoon, and my job is to find how to win the winning position,' Weinstein told the Soviet ambassador to Hungary, who had come for one of the rounds of the event, without a trace of embarrassment.

The Budapest Candidates' tournament was Isaac Boleslavsky's finest

Chess on the beach. David Bronstein (standing) watches how his friend Boris Weinstein (with cap) is doing. The photo was probably taken at the end of the 1940s or in the early '50s.

hour. Playing with ease and naturalness, he won game after game. Boleslavsky was leading before the last two rounds, a point ahead of his friend Bronstein. Counting on an easier finish, his victory seemed assured.

In 1950 the rules for playing for the World Championship hadn't been worked out conclusively. The idea was tossed around that if the world champion lost a World Championship match a three-way match-tournament should be played – between the new champion, the defeated one and the winner of the latest Candidates' tournament cycle. Of course, if first place in the Candidates' tournament was shared, then the situation would be completely different, but Weinstein thought that even then he would manage to organize a three-way match-tournament.

It was Weinstein who had the idea of giving Bronstein a chance to catch up with the leader of the tournament. For that Boleslavsky had to agree a draw with Kotov and then with Stahlberg in the last round. Then if Bronstein beat Stahlberg, followed by Keres in the last round, the friends would share first place. The good-natured Boleslavsky agreed to the suggestion, although his second Sokolsky was extremely upset and didn't hide it: why not fight for first place outright, especially as Gideon Stahlberg was playing very poorly in the tournament and Boleslavsky had the white pieces against him?

On hearing his second's plan Bronstein didn't feel very comfortable, but when he started talking about it with Weinstein the latter calmed him down: 'It's OK, David, we'll help Boleslavsky win the next Candidates' tournament, and you'll lose a match to him. And he'll also be world champion.' Bronstein won both his final games and shared first place with Boleslavsky. No three-way Botvinnik-Bronstein-Boleslavsky match, which Weinstein had secretly been hoping for, was organized, of course, and the friends had to play each other for the right to meet Botvinnik.

The relationship between the two winners was no secret to Botvinnik. On their game in Saltsjöbaden in 1948 Botvinnik wrote in his diary: 'A worthless draw', on their game in the national championship in 1949: 'A friendly draw. Practically repeated the famous game Riumin-Ragozin. Got to the 20th move.' On their game in Budapest in 1950: 'Made a quick draw with multiple exchanges.'

Before the start of the first game, following Weinstein's instructions, the players exchanged bouquets of flowers. Bronstein points out that this was the only such case in the history of chess events. Most likely. It's hard to imagine a more absurd spectacle: two grown men giving each other flowers before a duel that would be arduous for both of them.

Isaac Efremovich Boleslavsky possessed an exceptional chess talent, but his character was far from belligerent. Before the start of the match he said, 'Devik, why are we playing this match, we're doomed anyway against Botvinnik.' Boleslavsky's score against Botvinnik was indeed catastrophic (–7=4). Urged on by Weinstein and already having beaten the world champion, Bronstein thought differently, and it was obvious that his chances against Botvinnik were much better.

The Boleslavsky-Bronstein match appeared to be hard-fought: the players won two games each, concluding eight draws. Then according to the rules the battle continued until the first victory. In the first additional game the advantage switched from one to the other, and on the 55th move Boleslavsky could have won immediately by making a natural move, but he chose another continuation and the game ended peacefully. The 14th game turned out to be the last one – Bronstein quickly got a win as Black and earned the right to play a match with Botvinnik. This was the basic outline of events.

In actual fact it wasn't completely like that. Or rather, it was completely different. Confiding in his fellow-

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countryman and favourite pupil Albert Kapengut, Isaac Boleslavsky said that some of the games of that match were genuinely played, but to make the last game more convincing he even had to sacrifice an important novelty that had been thought up by the pioneers at the Kiev House of Pioneers. 'I don't think that Isaac Efremovich was very upset when he lost the match to me, if anything he was the opposite. By losing the match he experienced relief to some extent,' David Bronstein wrote many years later. It's impossible to check this. I don't rule out the possibility that Boleslavsky experienced relief mainly because this duel that was so unpleasant for him was over, and it's difficult to say today how many of the games in the match were played for real.

There isn't a word about this crucial milestone on Bronstein's sporting path in Weinstein's book *Improvisation in Chess Art*, and only the first game is given in the games section, accompanied by purely technical comments. Kapengut recalls: 'The subject of this match was extremely unpleasant for Boleslavsky, and when the conversation turned to it again one day, Isaac Efremovich just started waving his hands, bursting out with a quote from Sheridan – "Sold! Sold! Sold!" '

I think that the end of the Candidates' tournament, and the subsequent match with Boleslavsky, not to mention the duel with Botvinnik, brought Bronstein considerable psychological discomfort. Even if millions of fans of the game didn't know the details of the final rounds of the Candidates' tournament or the match with Boleslavsky, he himself, David Bronstein, knew everything and couldn't rid himself of this bitter taste. At the end of his life he said, 'Now, many years later, I doubt the fairness of my victory over Boleslavsky. Although, possibly, with it I saved my friend from a humiliating rout in a match with Botvinnik, which could have been a real catastrophe for him. However, by failing to win my match with Botvinnik, I also threw a shadow over my own chess career.'

The match between Botvinnik and Bronstein in 1951 was preceded by lengthy negotiations. Bronstein disputed many of the points in the rules with FIDE President Folke Rogard. The tactic of disagreement, which only worsened the already strained relations between the players, was suggested to Bronstein by Boris Weinstein, who thought that his man shouldn't yield an inch to the world champion. Was it right? Nine years later the 23-year-old Tal accepted absolutely all the world champion's conditions with a smile, taking away a very important psychological trump card from him – the harsh, prickly relations with his opponent that were characteristic of all Botvinnik's matches.

Botvinnik never took Bronstein seriously. Before his game against Bronstein in the national championship of 1945 a note appeared in the Patriarch's diary: 'play with slight irony', and after Bronstein crushed Kholmov in the national championship of 1949: 'The Spanish with 3...f5. What a disgrace! Doesn't this prove that he's aiming to confuse and has no prepared plans? Something like Reshevsky or Capa?'

Botvinnik's antipathy only intensified when Bronstein became his opponent in the World Championship match. The Patriarch was annoyed by everything: the young challenger's style, his preference for gambits, the King's Gambit in particular, his independent behaviour, his eccentricity, even his habit of holding a cup of tea with both hands. Quite a few negative references to his opponent's style can be found in Botvinnik's diary: 'a typical twisty (not energetic) player', 'a restless player', 'wrenched off a pawn', 'always little 2-3 move tricks', 'a coffeehouse rook sacrifice', 'does he have real grandmaster technique?', 'bold, but chaotic – he catches the fish', 'plays weakly in positions without the initiative', 'neurotic and probably suffering from idées fixes, but fully capable of working', and so on.

Botvinnik demanded that under no circumstances should Weinstein

be the challenger's second. This didn't eliminate the world champion's suspicions – fearing that Weinstein could put the methods of the organization for which he worked into action, Botvinnik developed his own methods of defence.

In ancient Tibet couriers carrying a written message had another option, the oral one, and the content of each differed considerably. If a courier found himself in the hands of robbers they might be able to use the message to their advantage, which was why the habit of writing deliberately false letters developed, to lure the enemies themselves into a trap. The precautionary measures taken by Botvinnik were no less effective than those of the ancient Tibetans. The doorbell at his flat worked, but the door opened only in response to a specific knock. Mikhail Moiseevich forbade his assistants to speak openly on the phone if they were talking about chess, and even when they were at his home they all had to talk by resorting to some kind of strange code.

Although Weinstein had no official function, he was the nerve centre of Bronstein's team. He even spent the night at the Peking hotel a couple of times, one wing of which was always at the disposal of the NKVD. Bronstein, who occupied a huge room in the Peking, often ate breakfast, lunch and dinner at Weinstein's place. He had lived in his flat for a long time, and everyone was used to him, considering him almost a member of the family.

The end of the match unfolded dramatically. After winning the 21st and 22nd games, Bronstein led 11½-10½. The coronation of a new champion seemed inevitable. After his victory in the 22nd game Bronstein was called to the NKVD box, where the minister and head of Dynamo Viktor Abakumov congratulated him and wished him success in the match. Bronstein only needed to make two draws to become world champion. Having shortly before been a point behind Botvinnik, the turnaround happened so quickly that the challenger himself couldn't take it in. Late in the evening of the same day he went to Weinstein, who for the duration of all the post-war years had tirelessly insisted to David that he could and should smash Botvinnik.

'When the Soviet team returned to Moscow in 1954 after their match with the Americans, Weinstein asked, "David, why didn't you stay in America?" '

In the Stalin era all the ministries worked deep into the night: the leader could call any time. In particular the lights never went out in the windows of the ministry where Weinstein worked. Half a century later Bronstein recalled that he asked then, 'Boris Samoilovich, am I going to win the match?' 'Yes, David,' Weinstein confirmed calmly, 'you are.' 'But I don't want to,' Bronstein said. It's impossible to check the details of that conversation on a late May evening in 1951 in the office of an NKVD colonel in Moscow, of course, but there's no doubt that Bronstein was correctly describing his condition before the last two games of the match.

Alexander Markovich Konstantinopolsky recalled that when Bronstein's team was having lunch in the restaurant of the Peking hotel the next day, Devik suddenly started saying something incomprehensible. Used to his oddities, his colleagues immediately sensed that this was something different. They called for medicine and Bronstein was taken by car to the clinic of the organization where Boris Weinstein worked. By evening he was himself again, and the next day he played the ill-starred 23rd game that he would remember for the rest of his life.

According to the rules that existed at the time, a participant in a World Championship match had the right to three time-outs. Although a request for a rest day had to be officially confirmed by a doctor, the examination procedure was virtually a formality. Decades later Bronstein wrote that neither he nor Botvinnik used their right to a time-out once, saying it was to both players' credit. What to think about this? He probably should have taken a breather after the 22nd game, pulled himself together, and demonstrated the desperate situation that the world champion was in all the more clearly. Bronstein himself didn't get that, and those who were with him didn't have enough courage or wisdom to explain it to him.

He didn't get that this was no longer the time for guessing and trying things out, that he, David Bronstein, had to make this final push. Without any hows or whys. Specifically now, and not sometime in the future. That there might not be a next time. This moment would never be repeated and bled in his consciousness right up until the last days of December 2006. Many

times during the game Bronstein could have obtained a clearly drawn position, could also have made a draw after the poor move that Botvinnik wrote down, but, missing all these opportunities, he lost.

When the game was adjourned and there was a whole night ahead for analysis, David Bronstein didn't understand how this night was different from all the other nights. He analysed the adjourned position in a very offhand way, and hardly looked at the move that Botvinnik wrote down. Bronstein recalled, 'my seconds thought that Botvinnik had probably written down the best move, 42.♗b1, and only Weinstein looked at 42.♗d6 with me, even staying the night in the hotel, although he lived around the corner.'

Bronstein's assistants give a slightly different version of events: they called him at the hotel more than once, but they couldn't find Devik. And only in the morning, in front of the doors of the Central Chess Club on Gogol Boulevard, where the completion of unfinished games took place, did they manage to meet with Devik hastily and tell him the results of their analysis.

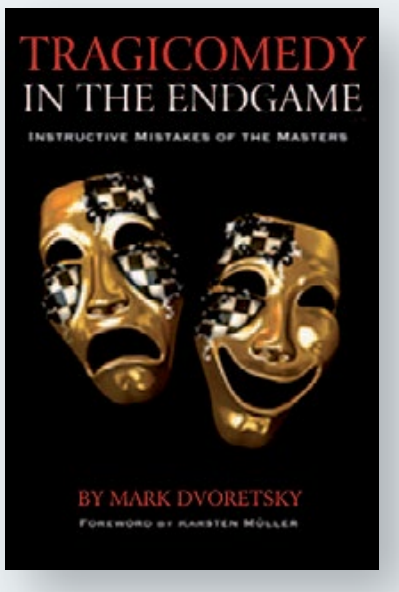
Isaac Boleslavsky was very offended by Bronstein at the time: Devik's old friend couldn't stand his careless, lackadaisical attitude to work. Especially to work in which the stakes were the title of world champion, and in which he was involved, perhaps, like no one else. But all was not yet lost. The last game of the match still remained, in which the challenger was White. On the morning of May 11, the day of the 24th game, Abakumov tried to call Bronstein and passed on a message that he shouldn't agree a draw under any circumstances, but play only for a win. But neither the all-powerful minister of internal affairs nor anyone else could change the course of chess history.

Bronstein didn't win the last game, the hour struck, and the hands of the clock met at twelve, frozen forever on those final numbers of the match, **12-12**. Botvinnik retained the champion's title. Weinstein's career in the ranks of the NKVD ended two years later. A purge began in the ministry after Stalin's death, and he was fired. He might also have said farewell to his freedom: back then lesser men than him had suffered the consequences, but he avoided it.

When the Soviet team returned to Moscow in 1954 after their match with the Americans, Weinstein asked, 'David, why didn't you stay in America?' Bronstein was taken aback: 'How could you say that? When you have everything here?' 'It's all right, I would have got out of it somehow,' Weinstein calmly remarked. Remembering this 40 years later, David Bronstein thought that his patron's question was evidence that only he knew how painful life was for Bronstein 'in the shadow of Botvinnik'.

Really? I think Weinstein meant something completely different: the free world, where Bronstein could have displayed his outstanding talent without having to look over his shoulder at anyone or anything. Bronstein could have become a forerunner of Kortchnoi, but he didn't have the courage for such a decisive step, or he just didn't think about it. It's difficult to say how the fate of a non-returnee would have unfolded in that case: the times were harsher than when Viktor Kortchnoi chose the path to the West. All these are just guesses, of course, but both Weinstein's question and Bronstein's reaction say quite a lot about each of their personalities.

Weinstein went into economics and became a candidate, then a doctor of sciences, a member of the scientific council of the Academy of Sciences, and wrote several monographs. Even after *perestroika*, condemning Stalin's mass repressions, he didn't deny the usefulness of forced labour. He brought up historical parallels, asserting that there were periods in the history of every country when the rights of the individual were trampled on in



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the name of the interests of society. Angry at the economic realities of the Russia of that time (1993), to get out of the economic crisis he suggested substantially increasing the severity of the system and the level of forced labour. He insisted, 'Anyone who behaves mercifully in economics is a criminal who should be shot.'

When Weinstein was serving under Beria, the latter sometimes joked, 'You're a good worker, Weinstein. But if you'd spent about six years in a camp, you'd work even better!' Although Weinstein claimed that his boss didn't let him do operative work, he knew a great deal, but he kept his silence even after *perestroika*. When the journalist Sergey Voronkov, who often saw him in those years, asked, 'Boris Samoilovich, now you can talk about absolutely everything, and that organization doesn't exist any more, so why don't you write your memoirs?', Weinstein replied that he wasn't too keen, as he'd signed a loyalty pledge in his time. A very understandable phenomenon in the Soviet Union, and in modern Russia. This, of course, is groupthink. *Esprit de corps*.

He had started writing regularly about chess back in the thirties under the pseudonym Ferzberry. It wouldn't be true to say that these notes were particularly unorthodox, but in the context of the monotonous Soviet diet Ferzberry's articles stood out for their style and ideas, which were different from the norm.

Weinstein also published quite a lot under his own name. Obviously the place where he worked opened the doors to any publishing company for him. Weinstein penned the books *Historical Development of the Meran System*, *Opening Combinations and Traps* and *Fighting Chess*. On Lasker – *The Thinker*. On Bronstein – *Improvisation in Chess Art*. Even half a century ago Weinstein was very worried that the game was turning into a memory contest. 'There is no doubt that in the 21st century, and, perhaps, even sooner, we'll see a revival of the cult of beauty in chess, that with each year it will acquire human, positive features, throwing out everything that is borrowed, self-serving, egotistical, everything that is foreign to the ideas of humanism,' Weinstein wrote in his characteristic style. Comparing chess with poker, he sang the praises of chess, believing that it was to chess that the future belonged.

Thus he wrote: 'Perhaps chess was a game in the past, but modern chess in its development is more and more acquiring the features of a genuine art.'

'The chess world is brought to life by those countless enthusiasts for whom chess is a form of human interaction. In other words, a means of self-expression and aesthetic perception in a fair intellectual contest with friends.' Phrases like this could have been said (and were later spoken more than once) by David Bronstein.

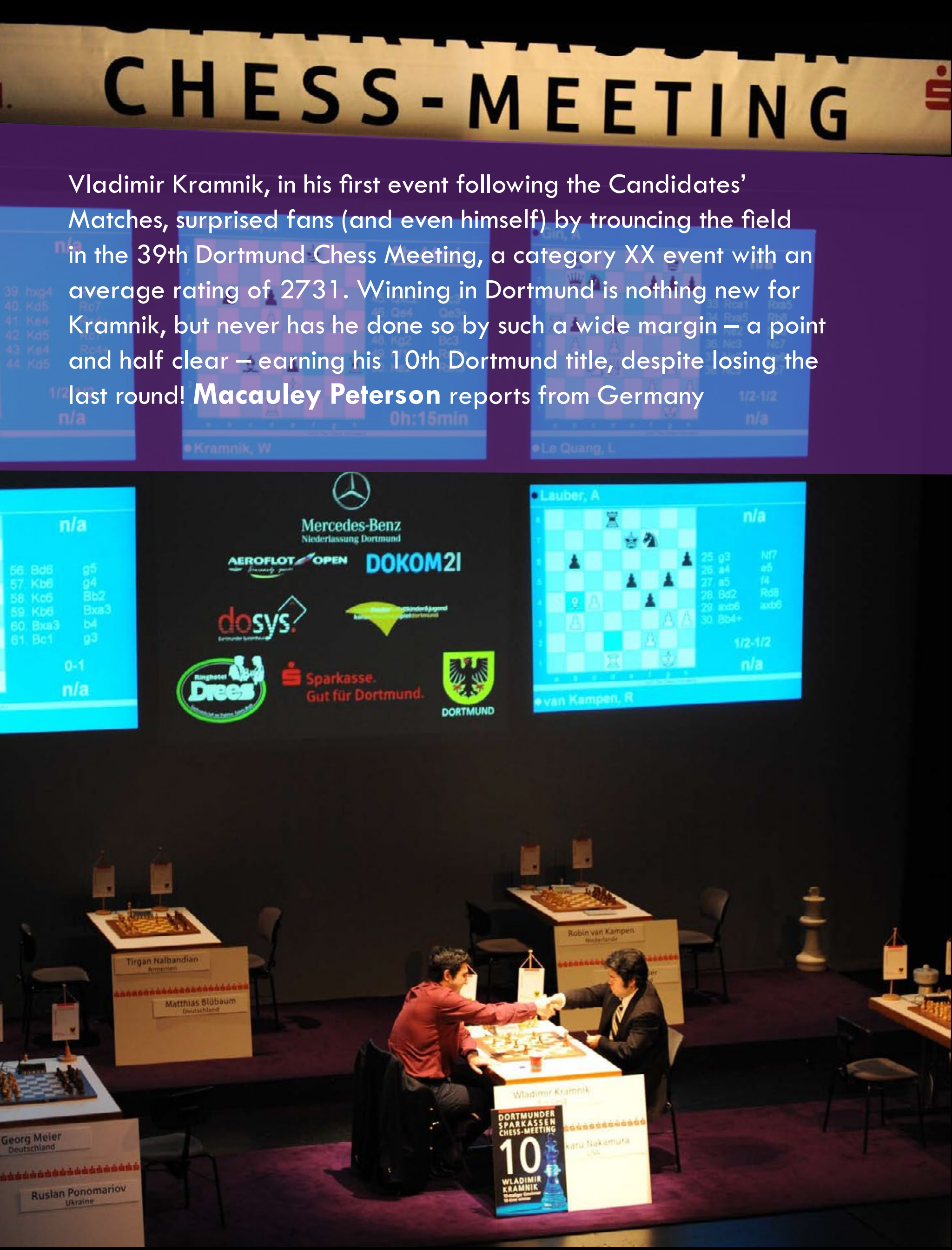
'A biography of David Ionovich Bronstein would not only be incomplete, but also distorted without the name of his patron and mentor.'

Weinstein was 17 years older than Bronstein, but the relationship between them was like that of father and son. Devik was used to asking his mentor for advice on large and small matters and picked up many of his manners and habits. Weinstein liked to play through the games of the old masters, to analyse them and ponder them. When he played offhand games he often exchanged opinions about the position with his opponent, encouraged him, discussed things, and then even gave advice.

David Bronstein didn't have the opportunity to talk to his partner during play, but he compensated for that with conversations before and after the game. Before simuls he could expound for a long time on the tactic he was going to use, explaining that it was essential to watch out for his pieces getting closer to the king, and recommending that his opponents ask his advice in difficult situations. Undoubtedly sowing more fear of the grandmaster in the participants in the simul than if he hadn't voluntarily forewarned them about his playing process in what he thought was a pep talk.

Seeming like a kind of mythological figure, and in conflict with everyone and no one at the same time, Weinstein produced the impression of a man who looked on everyone as if from outside and in his own way. David Bronstein also stuck to the same line of behaviour. Having invested a considerable portion of his soul in the young genius, the determined and purposeful Weinstein had an enormous influence on him, but also – unwittingly – created Bronstein's dependence on the man who was not only capable of eliminating all his everyday concerns, but also made the most important decisions that an adult shouldn't burden anyone else with.

Boris Samoilovich Weinstein died in 1993 at the age of 86. At his funeral an old professor who knew him well said, 'If Boris Samoilovich had lived in another country he could have been a head of state.' Weinstein lived almost all his conscious life under Soviet rule and it isn't easy to say what a man of his abilities would have done if he'd been born in Vienna, London or New York. But we can be certain of one thing: in a description of all the upheavals in Boris Weinstein's long life there might not even be room to mention his chess protégé, but a biography of David Ionovich Bronstein would not only be incomplete, but also distorted without the name of his patron and mentor. ■



Vladimir Kramnik, in his first event following the Candidates' Matches, surprised fans (and even himself) by trouncing the field in the 39th Dortmund Chess Meeting, a category XX event with an average rating of 2731. Winning in Dortmund is nothing new for Kramnik, but never has he done so by such a wide margin – a point and half clear – earning his 10th Dortmund title, despite losing the last round! **Macauley Peterson** reports from Germany

Mr. Dortmund's Tenth Trophy

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Top: Vladimir Kramnik with flowers and his tenth trophy.
Left: Anti-climax in the last round. Already certain of victory, Kramnik tried to defeat Hikaru Nakamura with a spectacular piece sacrifice. The attack ran out of steam and after 50 moves the Russian had to resign.

'I have to tell you honestly that I thought it's my last real chance in Kazan, actually, to fight for the title.'

One could be forgiven for finding that an odd sentiment, coming from Vladimir Kramnik who, at 36, is five years younger than World Champion Anand, and seven years younger than the latter's 2012 challenger, Boris Gelfand. Eliminated from the cycle earlier than expected, the former Champ will now have to wait at least two years to have another shot at a title bout.

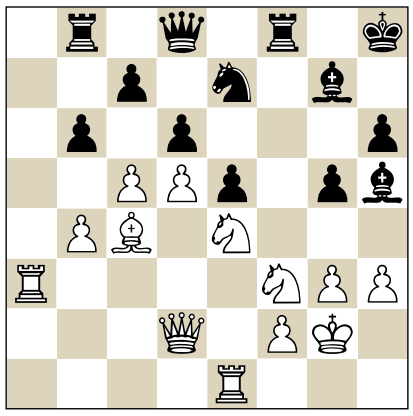
'I'm not sure if I can keep being a very top player at such age – I will be close to forty,' he lamented. Granting all due praise to Gelfand, Vladimir Borisovich believes it's more of an exception than a rule that a player of four decades can be a contender.

After such a painful defeat in May, Kramnik was having a hard time focusing on playing his next tournament in Dortmund. 'Somehow I felt a bit empty', he recalled. 'When I was going here I was not really feeling that I was ready for a big result.'

It was undeniably a big result – plus four with a 2870 performance rating and clear first by a point and a half – and yet, for Kramnik, it was totally unexpected.

Around the Sparkassen Chess Meeting, they call him 'Mr. Dortmund', and his tenth time atop the field of the annual supertournament was extra sweet – not only because it's a nice round number. As Kramnik pointed out following the closing ceremony, ten tournament victories in Dortmund surpasses Garry Kasparov's feat of nine wins in Linares. Notwithstanding the fact that Dortmund and Linares are quite distinct events, each with its own varied history, these ten days in July certainly represent an impressive run for Kramnik, who regained his place as Russia's number one, a spot briefly occupied by Sergey Karjakin.

This was not the Kramnik of old, derided by armchair Internet pundits as dry and risk-averse, unable to win tournaments with a large plus score. Kramnik played quite enterprising chess, exemplified by the gamble he took in the last round against a struggling Hikaru Nakamura.



Kramnik-Nakamura
position after 22...axb6

With the tournament already in the bag, and after more than thirty minutes of consideration, Kramnik exploded the position with **23.♘fxg5!?**

While objectively perhaps a mistake, his reasoning was sound.

'First of all I didn't see any clear way to improve my position,' Kramnik explained. 'I think I improved it already on maximum. And secondly it's very logical – all my pieces are in good places so it's logical to start an offensive. And thirdly, I have to admit that, although I had to calculate an incredible amount of lines when I was taking on g5 ... at some point I had like twenty minutes left and I still was not totally sure that it's a good move, but I thought, OK, since I already spent so much time on it, I have to go for it.

'Somehow I felt a bit empty', Kramnik recalled. 'When I was going here I was not really feeling that I'm ready for a big result.'

Otherwise it just doesn't make any sense now to play some solid move – it's just ridiculous – then why was I thinking for like half an hour?'

Interestingly, Nakamura had a hunch Kramnik was getting ready to sacrifice, as he explained outside the Dortmund *Schauspielhaus*, following an on-stage post-mortem that lasted more than an hour.

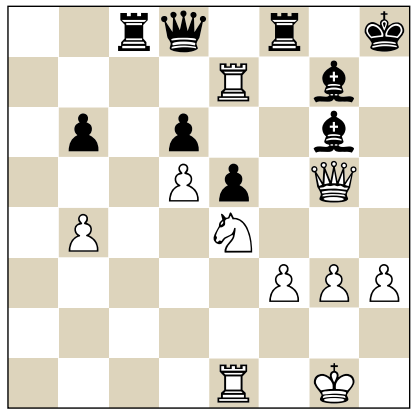
'When he got down to about thirty minutes I had a feeling he was going to play something off the wall like ♘xg5,' Hikaru said. A similar scenario occurred in London last December, where Kramnik used a large chunk of time before sacrificing material, partly out of frustration.

'I'm not sure why this is, but whenever I play Kramnik I just feel like the King's Indian is the right choice. When we play he just doesn't seem to have the same feel for the position that I do,' Nakamura said, suggesting that by outplaying Kramnik in the preceding middlegame, he had actually provoked him to gamble on the sacrifice.

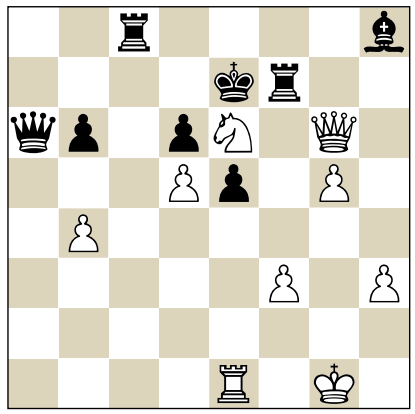
Even with White a rook down, the position is not clear at all because White's knight is so strong on e6, Kramnik explained. The compensation is very long-term, but Kramnik nevertheless was satisfied with his decision.

'The only problem in this game was, I believe in fact, from a human point of view, it was more difficult to play with white,' Kramnik said, reasoning that Black had mostly only-moves or obvious moves, while he himself had a wide range of interesting alternatives which forced him to eat up a lot of time on the clock. Kramnik was quick to credit Nakamura's natural strengths in this type of sharp, calculation-rich position, and observed that it was very risky to play as he did against the American.

The game continued: **23...hxg5 24.♕xg5 ♗g6 25.cxd6 cxd6 26.♖a7 ♖c8 27.♖xe7 ♖xc4 28.f3 ♖c2+ 29.♔g1 ♖c8**



30.♖a1 In the post-mortem the players looked at length at 30.h4 and 30.b5, which were both considered improvements. **30...♖f7 31.♕xg6 ♕xe7 32.♘g5** Kramnik's original plan was 32.♘xd6 ♖cf8 33.♘xf7+ ♕xf7 34.♕xf7 ♖xf7 35.♔g2. **32...♔g8 33.♕h7+ ♔f8 34.♘e6+ ♔e8 35.♕h5 ♗f6 36.g4 ♕b7** Stronger was 36...e4 37.♖e1 exf3!. **37.♖d1 ♕a6 38.♕g6 ♔e7 39.g5 ♗h8 40.♖e1**



40...♕a3 Now Black takes over. **41.♘d4 ♕xb4** More direct was 41...♖c1 42.♔f2 ♕b2+ 43.♘e2 ♖xe1 44.♕e6+ ♔f8 45.♕xd6+ ♔g8 46.♔xe1 ♗g7 and White's position is hopeless. **42.♘f5+ ♔f8 43.♖d1 ♖c2 44.♘d4 exd4 45.♕xc2 ♕c3 46.♕e4 ♕e3+ 47.♕xe3 dxe3 48.♔g2 ♗c3 49.♔f1 ♖xf3+ 50.♔e2 ♖xh3** White resigned.

The game lasted into the sixth hour of play and turned Nakamura's first Dortmund experience from what was – in his words – 'a complete disaster' into only 'a bad tournament'.

The post-mortem lasted more than an hour. With amused looks Vladimir Kramnik and Hikaru Nakamura listen to Anish Giri as the voluble Dutchman chimes in with a suggestion.

Nakamura finished with 4½ out of 10, the same score he mustered in Bazna a month prior, although even he finds it hard to believe. At the Kings' Tournament, Nakamura noted, he was pressing often, with chances to win in several games, whereas in Dortmund he was worse – if not much worse – out of the opening. 'I was outprepared in most of my games, and the other big issue is the fact that I wasn't willing to just accept draws in this tournament. In many games it seemed, looking back in retrospect, that I went out of my way to create double-edged positions, or end up in worse positions just because I felt like trying to win.'

Nowhere was this clearer than in his fourth round loss to Kramnik, when, in an equal endgame, Nakamura self-destructed. Even he isn't sure quite why. 'I think I just lost my head really. I don't even know what I was thinking. Really there aren't words to describe it. I just kind of lost it.'

Nakamura sounded a bit lost metaphorically speaking as well. Since winning the Tata Steel tournament in January, he recognizes that his game has been on a downward trend. 'Mentally, my mind's not completely on chess. There are a lot of other things going on in my personal life. It's just a matter of finding that perfect balance, and getting back into the groove again.'

Nakamura's Wijk aan Zee win raised expectations in his adopted home of St. Louis, and he has been feeling additional pressure in the wake of newfound local celebrity, stemming from his affiliation with the growing Chess Club and Scholastic Center there.

On the last day of Dortmund, Nakamura felt he had finally played a good game. While some luck came his way, Hikaru said, 'He's still Kramnik, and certainly beating him – with either colour – is going to be a good result.'

For Kramnik, the loss was the sole blemish on an otherwise stellar tournament. Had he managed to eek out a win, Kramnik noted that, in addition to breaking 2800 for the first time since 2003, he has never scored plus six in a round-robin tournament. So with nothing much to lose, he wasn't looking for drawish lines.

Despite the hard work that had gone into the Candidates', opening preparation for Kazan did not play a significant role in his success in Dortmund, other than in the most general terms. 'When you work for at least half a year very seriously on chess, it also improves your play,' he explained. There were a couple of exceptions, for instance, the first game with Ruslan Ponomariov – a King's Indian, which he had prepared for Teimour Radjabov.

'I kind of used my preparation, but in fact I just forgot everything (laughs). Only thing that I remembered [was] that ♗e3 was an interesting move and nobody really plays it, but of course I had a lot of analysis after which I couldn't really remember. But it was OK, since immediately he went a6 – a move which I hadn't checked – and we started to play.'

For Ponomariov, despite losing, this game was the one he considered the most interesting.

NOTES BY
Ruslan Ponomariov

KI 15.3 – E94
Vladimir Kramnik
Ruslan Ponomariov
Dortmund 2011 (1)

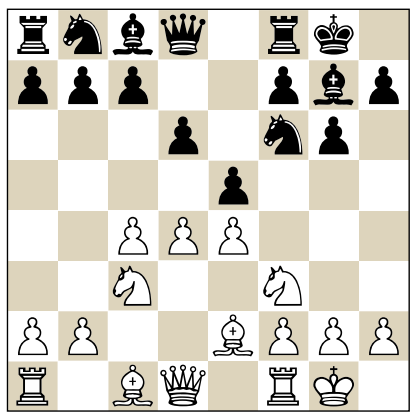
Last year I won the tournament in Dortmund, and this was largely thanks to a spectacular win at the start over one of the main favourites, Vladimir Kramnik. On this occasion we were paired together in the very first round, and there was no doubt that a crucial encounter was in prospect, one which could decide the outcome of the tournament.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6!?

A slight surprise. Here Vladimir stopped to think for a moment: was I intending to play the Grünfeld Defence, which he had so painstakingly avoided in his Candidates' match against Grischuk, preferring set-ups from the English Opening?

3.♘c3 ♗g7 But no, I decided to try my luck in the King's Indian.

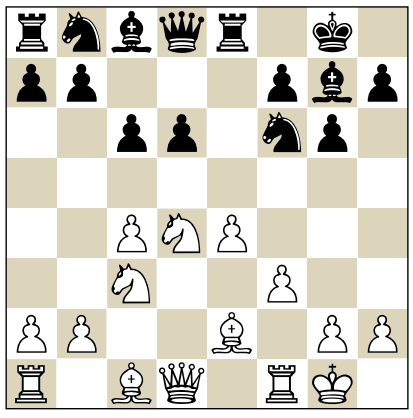
4.e4 d6 5.♗e2 0-0 6.♘f3 e5 7.0-0



7...exd4

In his match with me, last May in Saint Louis, Nakamura chose either 7...♘c6 or 7...♘a6, and although at times he did not solve all his opening problems, the positions turned out to be quite complicated with chances of muddying the play. In my preparations for the match I also had to pay attention to other possibilities for Black, one of which I decided to try myself.

8.♘xd4 ♖e8 9.f3 c6



10.♔h1

Logical prophylaxis against ...♕b6. It is well known that after 10.♗e3 d5! Black advantageously transposes into the Gligoric Variation. True, if White wants to simplify the situation, this is not so bad for him. For example, some games have continued 11.cxd5 ♘xd5 (or 11...cxd5 12.♕b3) 12.♘xd5 cxd5 13.♕b3 ♘c6 14.♖ad1, when it is rather difficult for Black to complicate the play, if he suddenly needs to win at all costs.

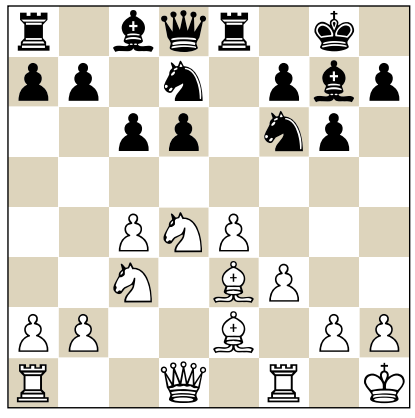
10...♘bd7

Now 10...d5?! 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.♗g5 looks dangerous for Black. The best known example on this theme is the game Tal-Spassky, Montreal 1979, which was annotated in the excellent book *Montreal 1979 – Tournament of Stars*.

But 10...♘h5!? is interesting, as tried recently at the tournament in Monaco by Alexander Grischuk. In choosing the move in the game I was guided more by subjective factors, rather than trying to find the strongest move. During the Candidates' matches in Kazan, Kramnik's opponents were Radjabov and Grischuk, and therefore he was bound to have paid attention to the King's Indian. But possibly he had paid slightly less attention to 10...♘bd7. Besides, the development of his pieces should not be so bad for Black.

11.♗e3!?

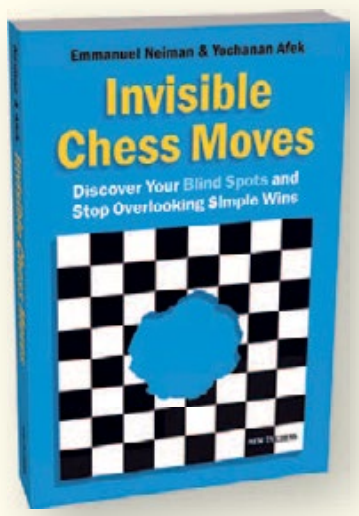
But Vladimir is not taken aback, showing that in any variation he has his own ideas. The main move is considered to be 11.♗g5, preventing ...d5. It is also recommended for White in one of Alexander Khalifman's books *Opening for White According to Kramnik* ☺. True, it was published in 2006.



11...a6!?

Here too 11...d5!? 12.cxd5 ♘xd5! (if 12...cxd5, then 13.♘db5 dxe4 14.♗f4! is rather unpleasant) should be checked. But I did not like the fact that White has quite a pleasant choice between the simplifying 13.exd5 ♖xe3 14.dxc6 and the more ambitious 13.♘xd5 cxd5 14.♘b5 ♘b6 (14...dxe4 15.♘d6, with a slight advantage for White) 15.♗f4. Here Black should probably have compensation for the pawn, but White too is not taking much of a risk. In the game I wanted to retain more tension and the possibility of not simply exchanging pieces. In any case this variation is still quite unexplored and it is difficult to say which is stronger.

Again, an interesting alternative here is the idea seized on by Grischuk: 11...♘h5!? 12.g4 ♘hf6, or 11...a5!? 12.♕d2 a4. If you look at games from the 1953 Candidates' Tournament in



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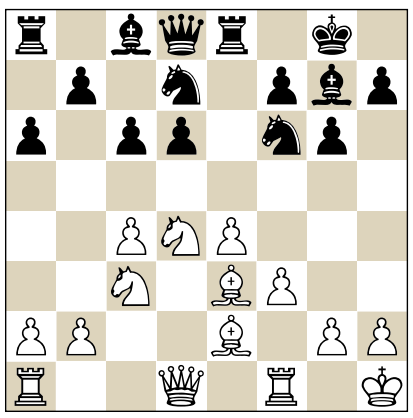
NEW IN CHESS

Ruslan Ponomariov felt that his first-round loss against Kramnik had far-reaching consequences. While it boosted the Russian's morale, it undermined his own self-confidence.

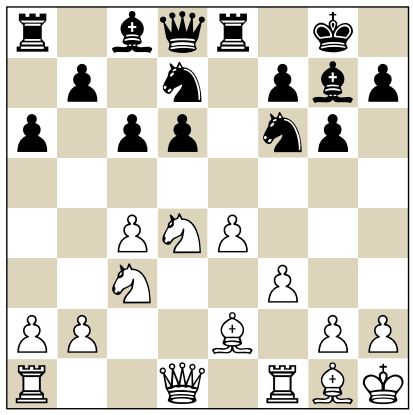
Zurich, you can find much in common as regards the pawn structure. Only, there it arose from the variation with the fianchetto of the white bishop on g2, rather than the development on e2. But which side does this favour?



12.♘c2!?

To judge by the time spent, I think that here Vladimir also began playing independently. The move played is quite ambitious: it emphasizes the main drawback of Black's position – his weak d6 pawn. But at the same time this involves a positional concession – White voluntarily withdraws his knight from the centre. However, at the board it is impossible to calculate everything, and the choice of this or that possibility is a matter of taste and confidence in one's powers. True, it is not possible to play altogether serenely.

If 12.♕d2, then 12...d5 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.exd5 ♘b6 is definitely very strong. But 12.♗g1 is more cautious:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) The computer even recommends losing a couple of tempi by 12...♘h5 13.f4 ♘hf6 14.♗f3 ♘b6 15.b3 c5 16.♘de2 ♗g4 17.♕d2 ♗xf3 18.gxf3, but I think that here White has the easier game;

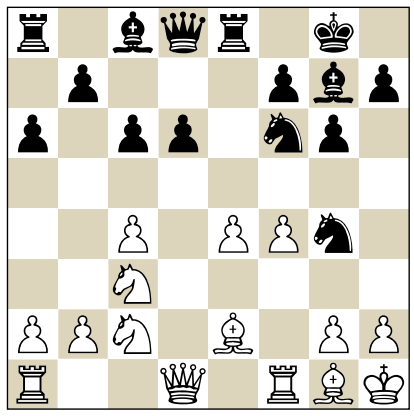
B) All Black's problems are also not solved by 12...d5 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.exd5 ♘b6 15.♕b3 ♘fxd5 16.♘e4 (or 16.♘xd5 ♘xd5 17.♗c4 ♗xd4 18.♗xd4 ♗e6 19.♖fd1 ♕g5 20.♗f1 ♖e7 21.♖ac1, with the advantage of the two bishops);

C) However, all the same I was intending to drive the white knight from the centre by 12...c5!? 13.♘c2 ♘e5, followed by something like ...♗e6, ...♘c6 and ...♘d7, when in general Black's pieces can jump about and he has active counterplay.

12...♘e5

Also a critical move – Black must play actively, as otherwise his weaknesses will gradually tell.

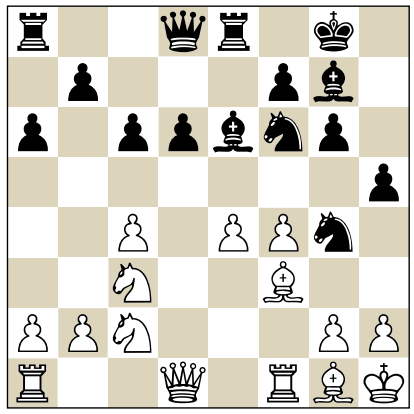
13.f4 ♘eg4 14.♗g1



14...h5! My last three moves were evoked by the Benoni Defence. Black is ready to sacrifice his knight for the sake of active counterplay.

15.♗f3 A good illustration of Black's idea is provided by the direct 15.h3?! ♘xe4! 16.♘xe4 ♖xe4 17.hxg4 ♕h4+ 18.♗h2 hxg4!? 19.g3 ♕e7 20.♗d3 b5!, when the white king feels rather uncomfortable.

15...♗e6



16.b3?!

The first step in the wrong direction. Of course, it is natural to defend the c4 pawn, but at the same time the move b2-b3 weakens the long diagonal and gives Black additional tactical possibilities. The correct continuation

NEW!

Maurice Ashley: What Grandmasters don't see Vol. 3: Summary and Test

Many times, when a top player blunders, it is routinely described by the esoteric term „chess blindness". In this series What Grandmasters Don't See, chess trainer and worldclass commentator Maurice Ashley strips away the myth and for the first time explains why the root of these mistakes is more often based in the psychology of human learning. In this DVD, the third volume of the three part series, Ashley completes his idea of Protected Squares from Volume 1, showing that squares seemingly guarded by pieces are often the breeding ground of amazing tactical oversights. He also blends the themes from all three volumes to give a thorough picture of the key ways that the viewer can exploit the typical mistakes by players of all levels. In the first half of the DVD, Ashley uses brilliant games and positions to explain each lesson in his dynamic commentary style. The second half of the DVD is filled with examples to test the viewer, with a series of exercises of increasing difficulty. The material is drawn both from classic and from recent games. Video running time: 3 hours 45 min. **29,90 €**

Karsten Müller: Chess Endgames 9 – Rook and Bishop

Endgames with rook and minor piece against rook and minor piece are frequently seen in practice, even more frequently than rook endings. Nevertheless, they are to a large extent ignored in chess literature. This new endgame DVD fills that gap. One after another, the four different distributions of material (rook and knight versus rook and knight, rooks with bishops of the same and of opposite colour and rook and bishop against rook and knight) are put under the microscope. Karsten Müller has even divided the last of these themes into two chapters, since in endings in which the side with the bishop has an advantage quite different motifs are the order of the day compared to those endings in which the side with the knight is in the driving seat. In addition, the endgame expert from Hamburg also investigates endings with four rooks and minor piece and explains the important technique of making the correct exchanges. In view of the varied distributions of material, on this DVD Karsten Müller acquaints you with a whole series of rules of thumb to guide your efforts, e.g. "In the duel between knights even a slight initiative is very important", "Bishops of opposite colours favour the attacking side" , "With bishops of the same colour an advantage in space and a good bishop are what count", "In the struggle against a knight a bishop prefers open positions and a fluid pawn structure, whereas the side with the knight is after total control". But in this course, the author also wants to train your feeling for the exceptions to such rules. because that is where the real art of the royal game can be found. **29,90 €**

Viktor Bologan: Beating the Sicilian Vol.2

The second volume of the Open Sicilian is dedicated to two very important areas: the most interesting opening of all time the Najdorf Variation, and also to the most romantic line in the Sicilian - the Dragon Variation. It's actually enough to point out that both openings were played successfully by Garry Kasparov with Black. The author's task was to give White some clear lines which will survive all kind of possible improvements from the black side and still be able to give White hope for an advantage. In both cases Bologan recommends a setup with f3, Be3, Qd2, the so-called English Attack. The similarity of ideas makes the job of memorising lines somewhat easier, and at the same time the traditional line by line approach allows the avoidance of any unpleasant surprises. Many mysteries under the surface of the Sicilian can be found by hard work and experience and the author really hopes that this DVD will help you in that!
Video running time: 5 hours 40 minutes.
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Viktor Bologan: Beating the Sicilian Vol.3

The third volume of the Open Sicilian deals with Black's second move 2....e6 which he usually adopts when striving for a complex game full of subtleties in order to outplay White, especially when his opponent is lower rated. But the reverse of the medal is that Black assumes quite high risks, and with strict reactions White can pose him serious problems. Of course the DVD is mainly dedicated to all kinds of Paulsen lines with 4... a6 and 4... Nc6, where against most of the main variations Bologan advises the same setup as against Najdorf and Dragon with Be3, f3 and Qd2, usually followed by long castle. Despite the many games being played every day, Black is still far from safe equality here. Apart from some side lines like 5...Bb4, quite important is to learn how to play the classical Keres Attack. After 6.g4, according to the Moldavian GM, only the variation with 6...e5 still poses White unpleasant questions - to which of course he comes up with some answers too...
"With the final word on the Sicilian trilogy, I would encourage the viewer to play the Open Sicilian and to have the DVDs as partners, consultants and if lucky a friend in both critical and good situations."
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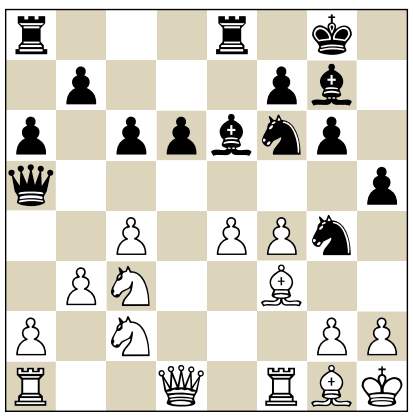
for White was pointed out in online analysis on the ChessPro website by Konstantin Landa – 16.♕d3!, after which I think that White's chances are better. Although, Black still has possibilities of muddying the position: 16...b5 17.♖fd1! ♗h6!? (the exchange of queens is bad for Black, since after 17...♗xc4 18.♕xd6 the knight at g4 is out of play) 18.g3 g5 19.cxb5 axb5, and White still has to find a series of accurate moves to neutralize Black's activity.

16...♕a5!



17.♕e1?!

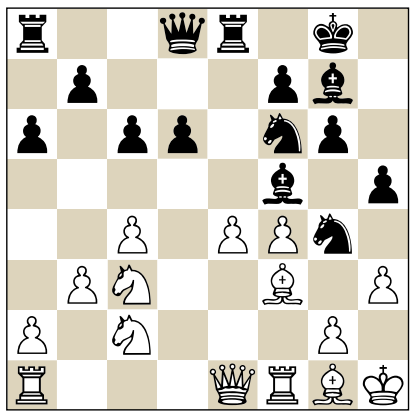
A strange move, which during the game I had not even considered. The white queen moves onto the e-file, directly opposite the black rook on e8. Now some tactical ideas are bound to arise!

17.♕d2 is stronger, although then after 17...♘d5!? White needs to foresee the not altogether human reply 18.♘b1! ♕xd2 19.♘xd2, when Black has nothing especially deadly after 19...♘xf4 20.♗xg4 ♗xg4 21.♖xf4 ♗c3! 22.♘f3 ♗xa1 23.♘xa1 ♗xf3 24.gxf3 d5 25.cxd5 cxd5, and the poor placing of White's pieces balances his slight material advantage, but not more.

I should also mention that if 17.♕d3 Black has another tactical trick: 17...d5!. True, here too White should be able to maintain approximate equality after 18.cxd5 ♘xd5 19.♘xd5 ♗xa1 20.♗b6 ♕b5 21.♕xb5 axb5 22.♘c7 ♗c3 23.♘xe8 ♖xe8 24.h3 ♘f6 25.♗d4 ♗xd4 26.♘xd4.

17...b5?!

Of course, we both saw the pin 17...♗f5!, but at the same time it seemed that as yet Black was not threatening to capture on e4 on his next move, and that White had a move for consolidation. However, this is not so. After 18.h3?! I did not notice the quiet move 18...♕d8!!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

after which White has very serious problems with his e4 pawn and with finding his next moves. But for a human it is not so simple to see such backwards moves, if just a couple of moves ago the queen was already on d8. Instead of this I made another natural move, maintaining the tension.

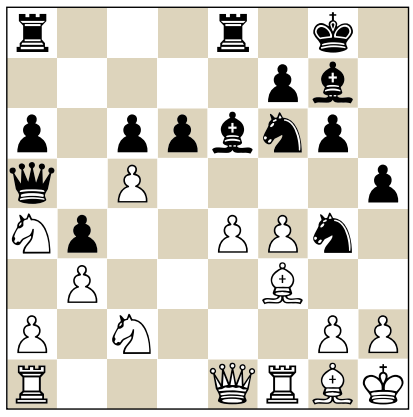
18.c5?

It was strange that my opponent did not take long to come to this decision, although the position looks quite complicated. Moreover, in this way White cannot solve the problems with his hanging centre.

Now was a good moment for the consolidation of the pieces: 18.h3!, and if 18...bxc4 19.♘d4!, returning the knight to the centre. To be honest, I do not see anything clear for Black. And if his activity peters out, his position will become strategically hopeless.

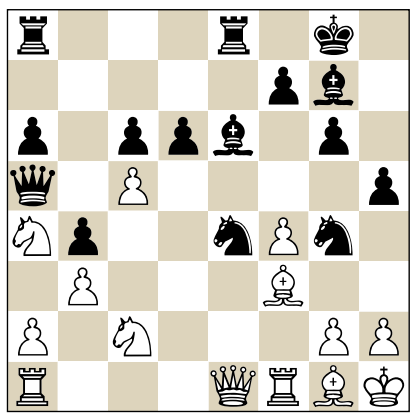
18...b4 19.♘a4

Another important moment, and possibly also in the tournament.



19...♗c4?

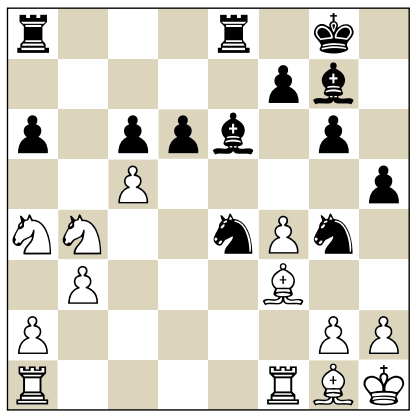
Unfortunately, I noticed this move as being an alternative, and I could not immediately understand why it was bad. I saw 19...♘xe4!. If there are no other moves in the position, it is made automatically. But I was rather concerned by the fact that Vladimir had allowed it so easily. The variations are not so complicated, but I was unable to make a proper assessment of them.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 20.♗xe4?! ♗d5!? (less clear is 20...♗f5 21.♗xf5 ♖xe1 22.♖axe1 gxf5 23.cxd6, when Black has won the queen, but the white passed pawn is rather unpleasant) 21.♕xb4 ♕xb4 22.♘xb4 ♗xe4 23.♖ae1 a5 24.♘b6 axb4 25.♘xa8 d5! 26.♘b6 ♗c3!? and Black has the initiative (or 26...♘h6, and Black has excellent compensation for the exchange);

B) After 20.♕xb4 ♕xb4 21.♘xb4



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

B1) 21...♘xc5, and in contrast to the game Black cannot be worse in the complications;

B2) also interesting is 21...♘ef2+!? 22.♗xf2 ♘xf2+ 23.♔g1 dxc5 24.♔xf2 ♗d4+ 25.♔g3 ♗xa1 26.♖xa1 cxb4

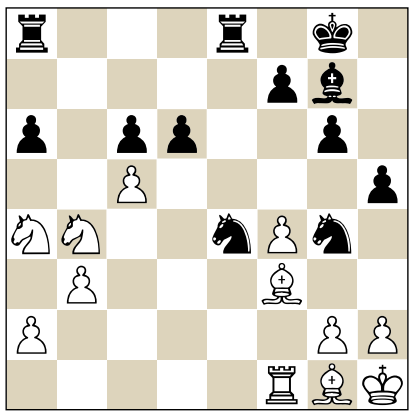
27.♗xc6 ♗f5 with an equal position;

C) 20.♕xe4 ♗xb3 21.axb3 ♖xe4 22.♗xe4 ♗xa1 23.♖xa1. I was afraid that I could lose all my queenside pawns and that the minor pieces would be stronger than the queen. But in fact because of his bad king here White has more problems. The computer suggests 23...♖e8! (but the human 23...♕c7!? is also not bad) 24.cxd6 ♕d8 25.♗xc6 ♖e6, with an excellent game.

20.♕xb4

Giving up the exchange, but now the queens are exchanged and many of White's dangers are behind him.

20...♕xb4 21.♘xb4 ♗xf1 22.♖xf1 ♘xe4



23.♘b6

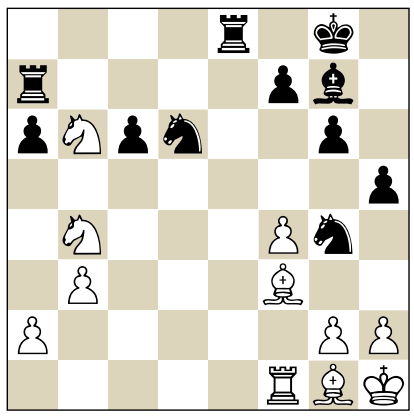
Only now did I realize that everything was not so simple for Black. It would seem that he is the exchange up and it is him to move, and his pieces, especially the knights, are actively placed. But nothing comes of this. Somehow, imperceptibly the white pieces have competently moved out of range.

For some reason initially I had only considered the capture 23.cxd6 ♖ad8 24.♗xe4 ♖xe4 25.♗c5 ♗f8! 26.♘xc6 ♖xd6 27.♗xd6 ♗xd6, when White regains the exchange and he is even a pawn up, but because of his bad king he still has problems.

23...♖a7!?

There is also nothing clear for Black after 23...dxc5 24.♘xc6. For the moment I decided not to be in a hurry to return the exchange.

24.cxd6 ♘xd6



25.♗xc6

Starting from the 20th move, without the queens Vladimir begins playing very strongly, choosing the moves that are most unpleasant for me.

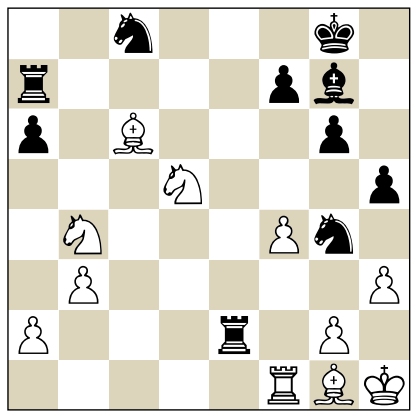
Things are easier for Black after 25.♘c4 ♘xc4 26.♗xa7 ♘d2 27.♗xc6 ♖e7! 28.♗c5 ♖e6 29.♖c1 ♗b2 30.♖d1 ♗a3 31.♗f3 ♘xf3 32.gxf3 ♘f2+ 33.♗xf2 ♗xb4, and because of White's weak pawns it is rather problematic whether he can convert his small material advantage.

25...♖e2 26.♘6d5

Someone in the press centre recommended 26.♗f3 for White, but again Black has quite an easy game here after 26...♖d2 27.♘c4 ♘xc4 28.♗xa7 ♘ce3, when the activity of his pieces gives him good grounds for optimism.

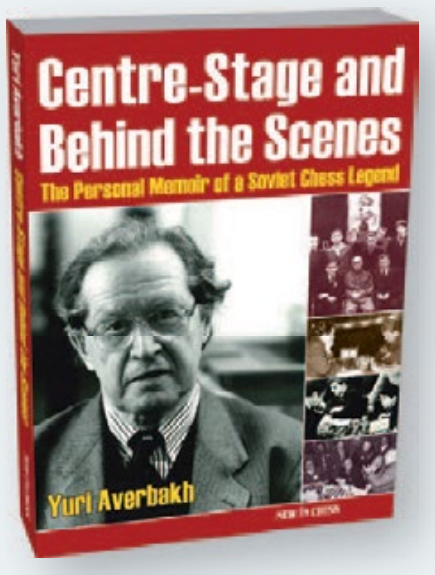
26...♘c8 The only move. Somehow imperceptibly my knight has moved from the centre to the edge of the board, whereas White's has moved from a4 to the centre!

27.h3



27...♘h6?

I was still filled with an unhealthy optimism, and I was still hoping to



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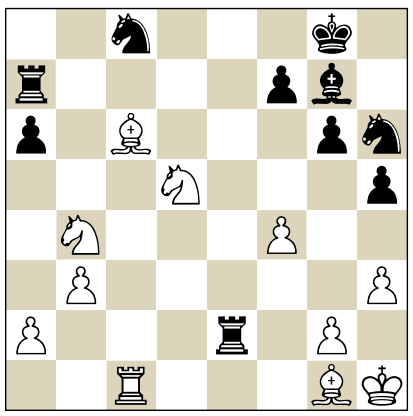
seize the initiative, although the recent manoeuvres of the black knights should have put me on my guard. Otherwise, of course, I would have played 27...a5!, with good drawing chances, for example: 28.hxg4 axb4 29.♘xb4 hxg4 30.♗b5 ♖e4 31.♖c1 ♘d6 32.♗xa7 ♘xb5 33.♗c5 ♖xf4 34.♘d5 ♖e4 35.a4 ♘d4.

28.♖c1!

It transpires that White is by no means obliged to hurry with the capture of the rook on a7, since for the moment it cannot go anywhere.



28...♘f5

To my horror I realized that in the tactics White might be able to capture the knight on c8 with check, after which the rook on a7 would be undefended. At the same time it is not even possible to give perpetual check, since when the bishop on g1 captures the rook it vacates a square for the king! Things also look depressing after 28...♔h7 29.♗a4 ♘f5 30.♔h2! ♘fd6 31.♗xa7 ♘xa7 32.♖c2, when White neutralizes any activity of the black pieces.

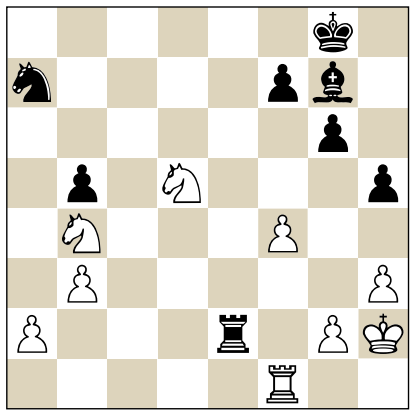
29.♗b5! ♘g3+

Perhaps more practical chances would have been offered by 29...♖c7!?; at any event, this move looks more impressive. But after 30.♘xc7 axb5 31.♘xb5 ♘ce7 nevertheless there are no further threats to the white king, and the passed pawns are bound to have their say.

30.♔h2 ♘f1+ 31.♖xf1 axb5

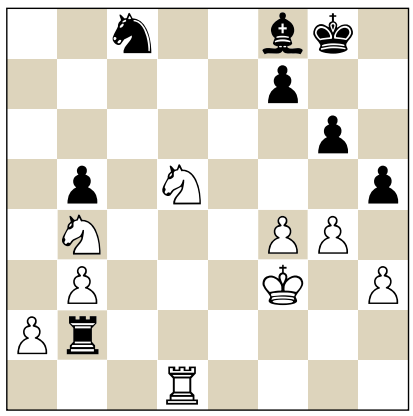
Unfortunately, now Black will no longer have the resource ...a6-a5 and the white knights will feel very comfortable.

32.♗xa7 ♘xa7



33.♔g3! After 33.♖c1 White detains the black knight, but after 33...h4 he still has some problems with his king.

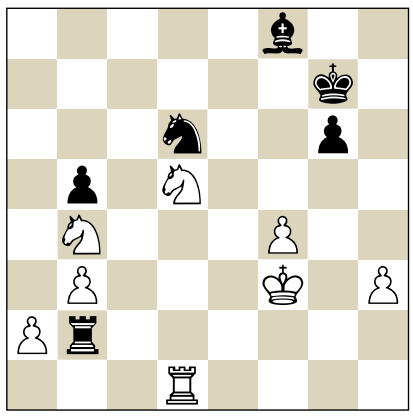
33...♘c8 34.♖d1 ♗f8 35.♔f3 ♖b2 36.g4!?



36...♔g7 It is quite difficult for Black to defend. It was dangerous, but nevertheless possible to open the h-file: 36...hxg4+ 37.hxg4 ♔g7 38.g5 ♖h2!. Instead of this I decided to try and activate my pieces at the cost of a pawn, but my opponent played very accurately.

37.gxh5 ♘d6 Here too 37...gxh5 38.♖g1+ ♔h6 was more resilient, when at least White cannot play directly for an attack: 39.♘d3?! ♖d2! 40.♔e3 ♖h2 41.♘e5?? ♗c5+.

38.hxg6 fxg6



39.♘c7! ♔f7?! 40.♘d3! ♖xa2 41.♘e5+ ♔f6 Or 41...♔g8 42.♘xg6, and wins. **42.♘d7+**

And in view of the new loss of material, Black resigned.

Probably my choice of opening in this game and my play in general were rather risky, but as, for example, the last round game showed, against Vladimir it is perfectly possible to play the King's Indian Defence. If in this game I had exploited my chances such as 17...♗f5 or 19...♘xe4, it is possible that the tournament also would have ended differently.

In the next two rounds, despite my loss I was able to win two games in a row, but after his win Vladimir was on the crest of a wave and in the first half of the tournament he scored a fantastic 4½ out of 5. In the end he won the Dortmund Tournament for the tenth time, and I should like to congratulate him on this unique achievement!

■ ■ ■

Ponomariov, as the 2010 winner, was disappointed with his fifty percent result. After an impressive showing in Kiev, winning the strong Ukrainian Championship, Ponomariov hit a new personal best Elo of 2764, and so he expected more.

His fourth round draw with Meier was a important moment in his tournament. After the loss to Kramnik, Ponomariov had scored back-to-back wins over Giri and Nakamura. If he could have extended the winning streak to three games, he figured it might have changed the result of his tournament.

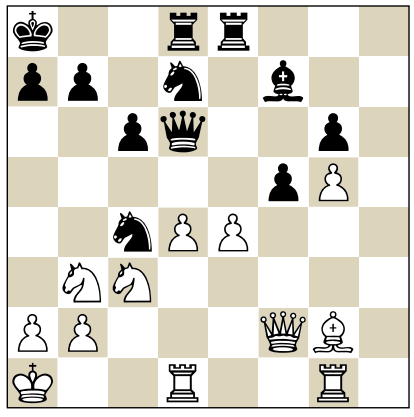
'If you don't use your chances in tournaments, some other players start to use [theirs],' Ponomariov mused, noting that – like his compatriot Vasily Ivanchuk – losing a few games affects him adversely in concrete ways. He may begin to sleep worse, or become more nervous at the board, and have to use still more energy to recover from each game. Conversely, he said, 'when everything goes good, you are like a wave,' the moves coming fluidly and easily.

Along these lines, according to Ponomariov, Kramnik gained confidence from his first round win and was thus encouraged to play more aggressively, a turn of events that may have had the greatest influence on his remarkable result.

Ivanchuk's career has deeply affected Ponomariov's own play, since he is such a significant figure in Ukrainian chess, however a pronounced difficulty coping with losses is one character trait that he would be better off avoiding.

Another problem for Ponomariov was that he arrived at this year's tournament without a second. Last year he was assisted by Zahar Efimenko, but the World Team Championship, where Efimenko was competing – along with several other potential candidates – meant none was available.

After the draw with Meier, Ponomariov scored just a half point from his next three games, including a loss to Le Quang Liem.



Le Quang Liem-Ponomariov
position after 30.♘b3

'When he played ♘b3,' Ponomariov recalled, 'I considered he would play something more active, maybe e5, maybe taking on f5, maybe ♘b5. I thought Black must be OK. My pieces are quite good, but somehow he started to create some tension. It was such a mess – like d5 he played.'

30...♕b4 31.d5 ♕b6?

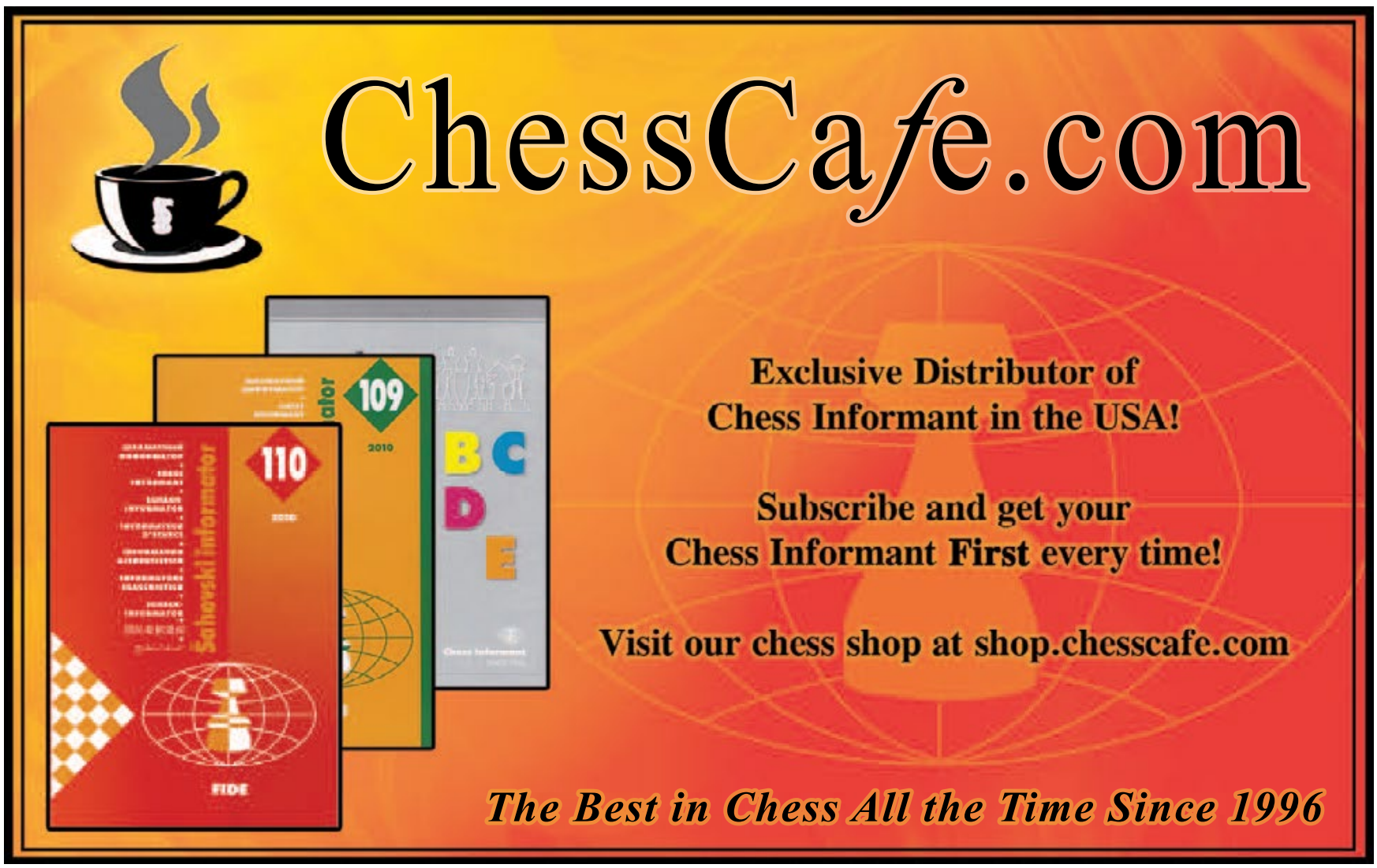
Instead of 31...♕b6, Ponomariov explained he should have played the simple 31...cxd5, and only later ...♕b6.

32.♕xb6 ♘dxb6 33.dxc6 ♖xd1+

The pawns on f5 and c6 were suddenly weaknesses, and Ponomariov miscalculated and collapsed. He had missed that White could capture 34.♘xd1 and then go back to c3, causing problems. The experience was similar to his mishandling of complicated middlegames in his May match in St. Louis versus Nakamura.

Le showed fine technique to convert his advantage. For the second consecutive year, the one Vietnamese member of the 2700 club took the runner-up spot in Dortmund. As in 2010, Le qualified by winning the annual Aeroflot Open, although at 2715 going into Dortmund – a new peak for him as well – he would have been a viable choice for an invitation.

Le was the only player to finish the event undefeated, although he also notched just the one win over Ponomariov. Le noted that his solid play is a good sign for the future, that he is able



to fight against the elite, but, he was quick to add, 'for the moment, the gap between the best players in the world and me is still quite big, and I have to work a lot to improve.'

Le is currently on a leave of absence from Saigon University in the capitol Ho Chi Minh City, where he studies banking and finance. That leave is up in January, when he will have to decide whether to return to school, or continue his professional chess career.

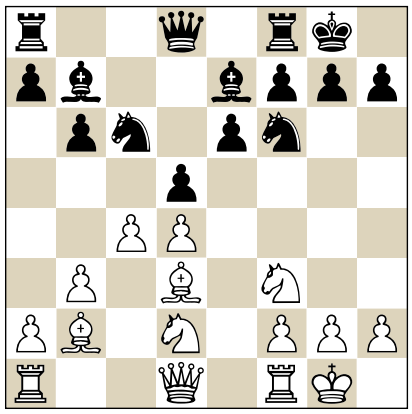
Le drew his games against Kramnik. In the second encounter he missed a good chance to upset 'Mr. Dortmund'.

NOTES BY
Le Quang Liem

QO 16.5 – E14
Le Quang Liem
Vladimir Kramnik
Dortmund 2011 (8)

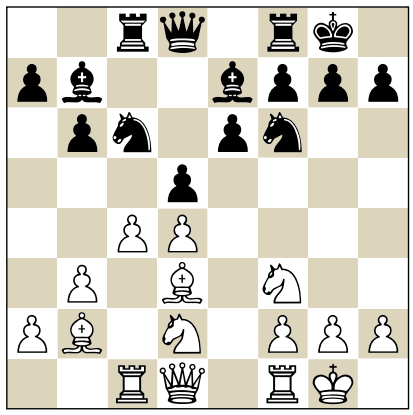
This game was played in Round 8. Kramnik had been playing very impressively and was leading the tournament two points ahead of me.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.e3 ♗e7 5.b3 0-0 6.♗b2 c5 7.♗d3 cxd4 8.exd4 ♘c6 9.0-0 b6 10.♘bd2 ♗b7



After a series of natural opening moves both sides seem to have achieved their aims: White has a little bit more space, while Black has developed quite actively. His position is harmonious and flexible.

11.♖c1 ♖c8 Playing against the positional threat of c5.



12.♕e2

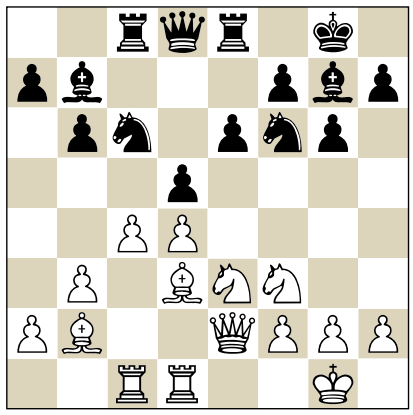
White can force Black to release the central tension with 12.a3, but this creates another target. For example, White may have to defend the a3 pawn after ...♗d6 and ...♕e7, and I did not like it. For instance 12...dxc4 13.bxc4 ♗d6 14.♖e1 ♘a5.

Pushing 12.c5? is a mistake because of 12...bxc5 13.dxc5 ♘b4.

12...♖e8 13.♖fd1 ♗f8

An interesting regrouping. Black wants to prevent all possible attacks by playing ...g6 and placing his dark-squared bishop on the main diagonal.

14.♘f1 g6 15.♘e3 ♗g7



16.c5

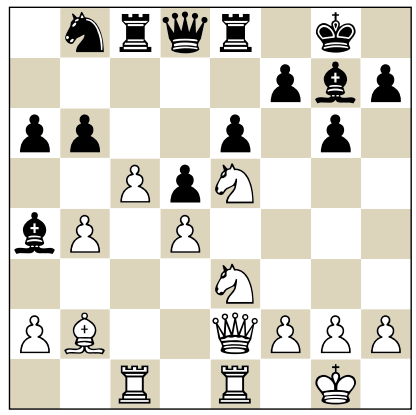
After improving the position to the optimal set-up, I decided to take concrete action. 16.a3 is met by 16...♘a5.

16...♘d7 17.♗b5?!

Giving a bishop for a knight in such a position is not a very good idea.

Better was 17.♕d2, and now 17...e5 (after 17...bxc5 18.dxc5 d4 19.♘g4! e5 20.♘h6+ ♗xh6 21.♕xh6 ♘b4 22.♘g5 ♘f8 23.♗c4 ♗d5 24.f4 White has the initiative) 18.dxe5 d4 19.♘xd4 ♘xd4 20.♗xd4 bxc5 21.♗a1 ♘xe5 should be completely equal.

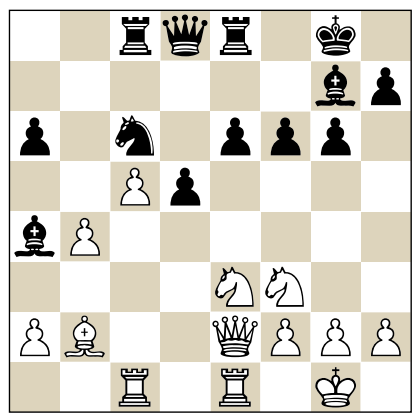
17...a6 18.♗xc6 ♗xc6 19.b4 ♗a4 20.♖e1 ♘b8 21.♘e5



21...bxc5

My computer suggests 21...♗xe5, but this is not a move that would come easily to a human mind. After 22.dxe5 h5 23.cxb6 ♕xb6 24.a3 ♘c6 it claims that Black has the advantage, which is very hard to believe...

22.dxc5 f6 23.♘f3 ♘c6



24.♕d3!?

Black is already more comfortable with his bishop pair and his strong centre. Realizing this, White tries to solve his problems by tactical means.

Black has a pleasant game after 24.♕xa6 ♖a8 25.♕b6 ♕xb6 26.cxb6 ♘xb4 27.♖c7 ♘a6.

24...♖b8?!

An inaccuracy, perhaps due to a miscalculation.

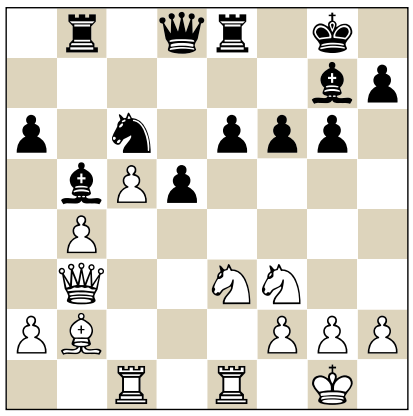
24...♕d7 keeps firm control of the queenside and the centre. Later Black can try to advance his centre pawns step by step, for instance after 25.♕a3 ♗b5 26.♕b3 ♘e7.

25.♕a3 ♗b5

The exchange sacrifice 25...♖xb4 26.♗c3 ♖f4 (26...♕b8 27.♘xd5!) 27.g3 ♖e4 28.♘d2 ♖xe3 29.fxe3 ♗b5

30.♕b3 leads to a complicated position. Obviously, Black has good compensation, but it's very difficult to judge over the board whether it is enough.

26.♕b3 Now Black cannot prevent White from playing a4.



26...a5?!

This and Black's previous move are the mistakes that pass the advantage to White. But once again, they were based on a miscalculation (see my notes to move 31). Now the play becomes more or less forced.

26...♗h6 27.♘g4 ♗g7 28.♘e3 ♗h6 was a way to the draw.

27.a4 ♗c4 28.♘xc4 ♖xb4 29.♕a2 dxc4 30.♗c3

Also playable was 30.♖ed1 ♕b8 31.♗c3 ♖b3 32.♕e2 ♗h6.

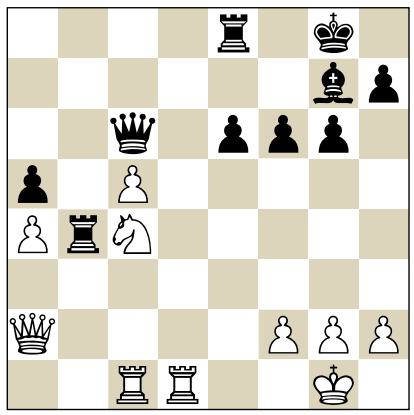
30...♖b3 31.♘d2

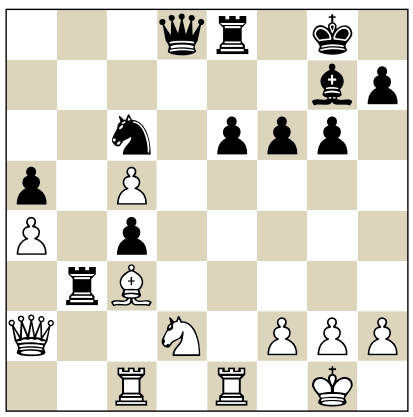
31...♘b4

My opponent intended to play 31...♖xc3 when he went for 24...♖b8, as he told me after the game, but he realized too late that after 32.♖xc3 ♘b4 33.♕xc4 ♕xd2 Black's previous moves would have been justified but for 34.♖xe6!, and suddenly White wins in all variations: 34...♖xe6 (34...♔f8 35.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 36.♕e6+ ♔d8 37.♕g8+ ♔c7 38.♕xg7+ ♔b8 39.♕f8+ ♔a7 40.♕e7+ ♔a8 41.♖e3) 35.♕xe6+ ♔f8 36.♕d6+! ♕xd6 37.cxd6, and Black loses his bishop for the d-pawn, and the endgame is clearly lost.

32.♗xb4 ♖xb4 33.♘xc4 ♕d5 34.♖ed1 ♕c6

This endgame is slightly worse for Black, but still defensible with accurate play.





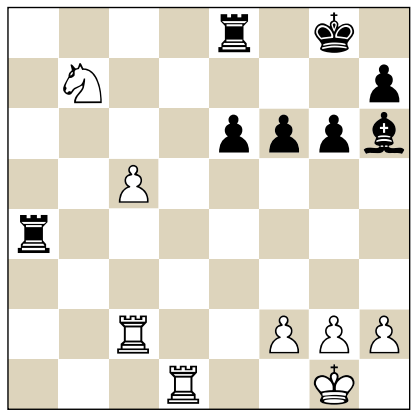
35.♘xa5

Stronger was 35.♕d2 f5 (if 35...♖xa4 36.♘xa5 ♕c7 – bad is 36...♕b5? 37.♖b1! ♕xa5 38.♕d7 ♕a8 39.♖b7, and White wins – 37.♘c4, with a white advantage) 36.♘xa5 ♕xa4 37.♘c6! ♖b7 38.♘d8 ♖b2 39.♕d6 ♗f8 40.♕c7 ♖e7 41.♕e5, and White is better.

35...♕xa4

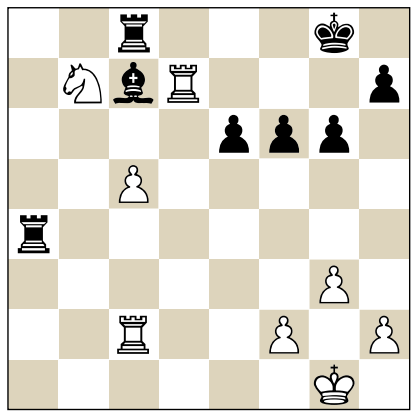
35...♖xa4 36.♕d2 transposes to the line above in the notes to White's 35th move.

36.♕xa4 ♖xa4 37.♘b7 ♗h6 38.♖c2



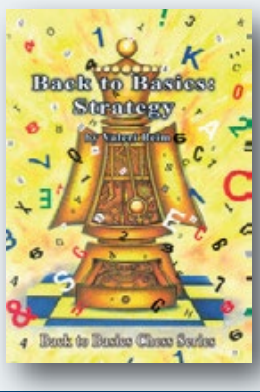
38...♗f4?! A mistake that ties Black to a passive defence. Black missed a very good chance to escape with 38...e5 39.g3 ♖d4! 40.♖b1 ♗f8.

39.g3 ♗c7 40.♖d7 ♖c8



41.♖cd2

After 41.c6 ♖a6 all Black's pieces are kind of paralysed. True, Black can only make waiting moves, but it remains doubtful whether White will be able to break through. Even now it is not clear to me how White can make much progress, e.g. 42.♔f1 (or 42.♖e7 e5 43.♖d2 ♖xc6 44.♖dd7 h5 45.♖g7+ ♔h8 46.♖xg6 ♖b8 47.♖gg7



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NEW IN CHESS

Although he again finished second, Le Quang Liem remained modest: 'For the moment, the gap between the best players in the world and me is still quite big, and I have to work a lot to improve.'

♖xb7 48.♖ge7 ♖b8, with a draw) 42... h5 43.♔e2 e5 44.♔d3 f5 45.h4 ♖b6 46.♔d2 ♖a6 47.♔c1 ♔f8.

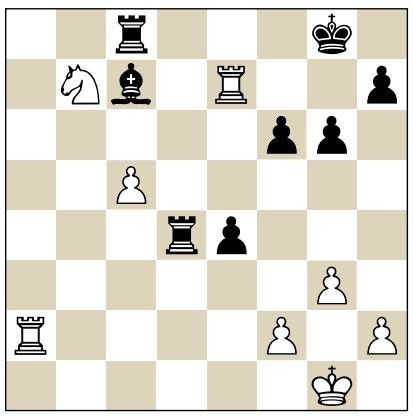
41...e5 42.♖e7!

This is stronger than 42.♔g2 ♖b4 43. c6 ♖d4 (the only move – White wins after 43...♗b6 44.♘d6! ♖xc6 45.♖a2 ♗c7 46.♖xc7 ♖xc7 47.♖a8+ ♔g7 48. ♘e8+, or 43...♖c4 44.♖xc7 ♖xc7 45. ♖d8+ ♔f7 46.♖d7+) 44.♖2xd4 exd4 45.♖xd4 ♔f8 46.g4.

42...♖d4 43.♖a2

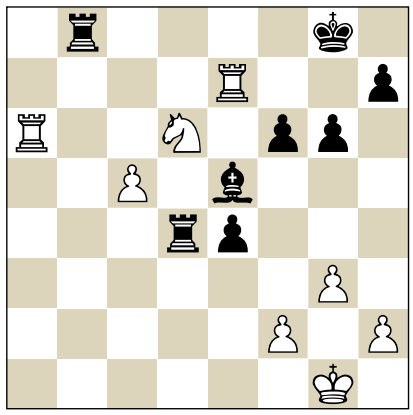
43.♖xd4 exd4 44.♘d6 is not enough to win: 44...♗xd6 45.cxd6 ♖d8 46.d7 ♔f8 47.♖xh7 ♔g8 48.♖e7 ♔f8 49. ♖e6 (or 49.♖e8+ ♖xe8 50.dxe8♕+ ♔xe8 51.♔f1 ♔e7 52.♔e2 ♔d6 53.♔d3 ♔e5 with a draw) 49...♖xd7 50.♖xf6+ ♔g7, and Black draws.

43...e4



44.♖a7?!

Instead, 44.♖a6! would have given White very good winning chances: 44...♗e5 (44...♗d8 45.♘xd8 ♖dxd8 46.♖aa7 h5 47.♖g7+ ♔h8 48.♖h7+ ♔g8 49.♖ag7+ ♔f8 50.♖f7+ ♔g8 51. ♖hg7+ ♔h8 52.♖xg6, winning) 45. ♘d6 ♖b8 (the most stubborn. Black's idea is to create a counterattack with his rooks. 45...♗xd6 loses after 46. cxd6 ♖d8 47.♖aa7 ♖4xd6 48.♖g7+ ♔h8 49.♖xh7+ ♔g8 50.♖hg7+ ♔f8 51.♖xg6)



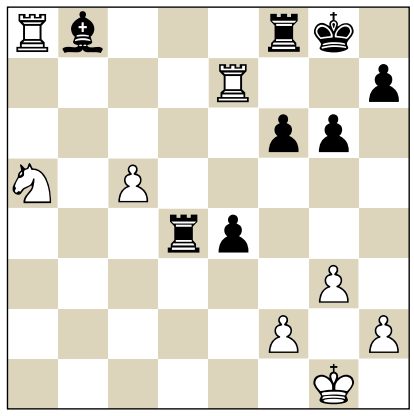
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

46.♘f7!!. But White has this move! The threat is ♘h6+. (The natural 46. ♖aa7 does not win, strangely enough, which shows that Black still has plenty defensive resources: 46...e3! 47.fxe3 ♖d2 48.♖g7+ ♔h8 49.♖xh7+ ♔g8 50.♖ag7+ ♔f8 51.♖b7 ♖xb7 52.♘xb7 ♖c2, and although White is two pawns up, he will find it difficult to convert his material advantage, as Black's pieces are extremely active) 46...♔f8 47.♘xe5 fxe5 48.♖xh7, and White is winning.

44...♗b8 45.♖a8

Now 45.♖a6 is no longer as effective as on the previous move: 45...♖f8 46. ♘a5 ♖a4 47.c6 ♖c8 48.♖a8 ♖f8.

45...♖f8 46.♘a5



46...♖a4! Black defends extremely well. After this move he is no longer in danger of losing.

47.♔g2 Or 47.♖b7 ♗e5 48.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 49.♘c6 ♖c4 50.♘xe5 fxe5 51. ♖xh7 ♖xc5, with a draw.

47...f5 48.c6 ♗d6 49.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 50.c7 ♗xc7 51.♖xc7 ♖xa5 52. ♖xh7 ♖a2 53.♔g1 ♖a1+ 54.♔g2 ♖a2 55.♔g1 ♖a1+ 56.♔g2 ♖a2

And we agreed on a draw. A fighting draw!

In the middlegame I was slightly worse, but thanks to his tactical miscalculation I managed to achieve a better endgame. Then, at some point, I missed some winning chances (if I had played 44.♖a6!). With correct defending my opponent saved the game and went on to win the tournament convincingly. I once again took second place in Dortmund with solid play (maybe quite too many draws) ☺.

■ ■ ■

Unlike Ponomariov, Anish Giri was quite happy to finish on an even score. In his own Dortmund debut, Giri's main regret was not capitalizing on more of his chances. 'It's often the case for me, but this time again, I wasted a lot of opportunities.'

NEW IN CHESS

At the start of the last round, tournament director Stefan Koth (on the left) presented Vladimir Kramnik with a small surprise commemorating his special achievement.

When asked about whether the summer holiday from school would also provide a chance to take a break and have some fun, Giri replied, enthusiastically, 'yeah that's what I'm doing now!...Rather than having a holiday, I probably would play a tournament.' He did however, have the month of August off, after FIDE's wild card list for the World Cup was announced... without Giri's name on it. 'I think I should have qualified, so next time I will try to have it all in my hands,' Giri said, referring to FIDE's rather opaque process of determining unseeded invitations.

After the tournament Kramnik marveled that he hadn't won a single game out of the opening, which was a nice feeling in a way – to be outplaying opponents, rather than relying predominantly on your work at home. His fifth round win over Giri, however, stands out. After the game, Kramnik revealed that he had made use of a weapon which had been waiting for Kasparov way back during their 2000 match in London.

'You know, when you have preparation for a World Championship match, of course it's pretty deep, and also my idea was more of a new concept than very concrete play because [the] computer is showing equal all the time against any move. But in fact, conceptually, you start to understand that it's not so easy – White has a dangerous attack quite often there.' That game, with the champion's notes, you will find below.

'Of course this tournament is kind of reassuring in a way because I feel that I can still beat the young guys', Kramnik said, and his brief examination of his own games with an engine revealed very few mistakes in his play, as well.

After targeting the Candidates' Matches for much of the last two years, and yet having it end in such a disappointment, Kramnik's tenth Dortmund win provides some consolation for his failure in Kazan. He was glad to be in good form, only sad that it came one tournament too late.

The next world championship cycle is too far away for Kramnik to even seriously think about. His goal is simply to enjoy playing, and to do it well. 'Now I feel like I'm back in business. You know I can still play – if not [in the] next future world championship, then at least I can try to win tournaments.'

Having already made his mark on the chess world, it's easier to take a more laid-back attitude. 'I'm not this kind of hyper-ambitious person,' he concludes, 'I mean, of course I have my ambitions, but I leave it to God to decide if I deserve it or not.'

NOTES BY
Vladimir Kramnik

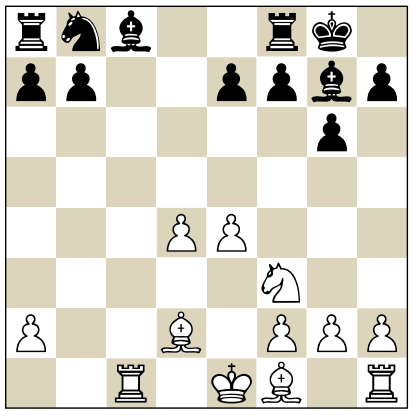
GI 4.1 – D85
Vladimir Kramnik
Anish Giri
Dortmund 2011 (5)

I like instructive games such as this one, even if they are not very complicated. In a Grünfeld endgame everything went logically and smoothly, and I spent only a little more than an hour on the game. Although the moves were quite simple, the result was a complete game. Some may find it rather tedious – however, this is a matter of taste.

There is a story attached to this game. I prepared this idea for my match with Kasparov in London in 2000. I won a very important game against him in the variation with 7.♗e3 and 8.♕d2, and two months after the match I defeated Leko in a rapid game. Later, Van Wely, Howell and Petya Svidler became 'victims' of mine in this variation. There were also a couple of draws, but even so the results were fantastic, although the variation is seemingly not very ambitious. However, I like the fact that White occupies the centre. Nowadays in the Grünfeld Defence White is so afraid of forced draws, that he is starting to play with a pawn on e3 or g3. Of course, this is possible, but when you occupy the centre, you at least demonstrate to your opponent that you are intending to fight for an advantage. So the variation is not without some venom. Another plus point is that computers do not assess it altogether correctly, everywhere giving 'equal'. Of course, Black has various ways to obtain acceptable positions, but there are also numerous subtleties.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗e3 c5 8.♕d2 ♕a5 9.♖c1

cxd4 10.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 11.♗xd2 0-0 12.♘f3



We have reached a well-known tabiya, which is not considered a key one and which can be arrived at by a different move order. At one time it was half-forgotten, but now it has again come to the fore. Earlier the endgame with the king on d2 was the main one, which I played against Kasparov in Astana in 2001 and which has now been exhaustively analysed to a draw, moreover, in more than one way (ten years ago I knew that White has nothing here). Whereas with the given set-up White retains the option of castling.

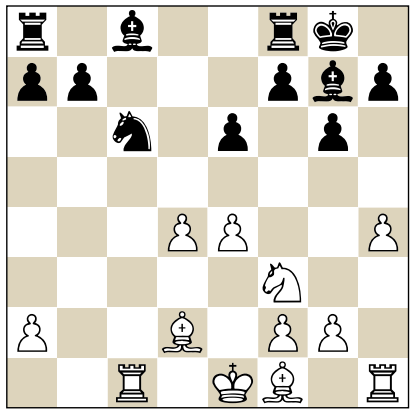
12...e6

The alternative involves 12...♗g4, but the move in the game is considered the safest. This was also played against me a year ago by Mamedyarov at the Tal Memorial. In contrast to that game, here I demonstrated a conceptually new idea – 14.e5, which was pleasant. At first sight it looks strange, and the computer does not find it. It was clear that at the board a human would begin thinking, and this is already a big plus. I did not employ it against Mamedyarov, because I did not remember the accurate move orders. It would have been annoying to 'detonate' the idea, since there is much forcing play and everything has to be worked out 'move by move'.

13.h4

Against Mamedyarov I chose 13.♗b5. After the game Anish 'cursed' me for not having also played it on this occasion.

13...♘c6



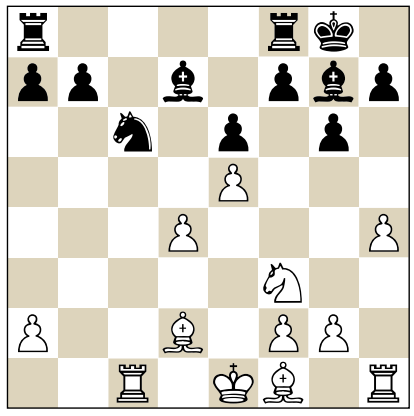
14.e5!?

Usually White advances his pawn to e5 only when he is forced to do so. After the move in the game White unexpectedly begins playing for an attack, in which he gives the appearance that all his pieces are already developed. A curious conception, in some way similar to the 'Berlin': the king remains in the centre, one rook most probably comes out on the h-file, and the other one is active on the queenside. In general it appeals to me when rooks come into play themselves, without castling. Usually White tries to develop by ♗d3, then ♔e2 or 0-0, but here he does not achieve anything, since Black ties him to the defence of the d4 pawn.

14...♗d7

It is important to understand that the afore-mentioned conception works because Black does not have the move 14...h6. After 15.h5 g5 the tactical justification of the idea becomes apparent – the immediate 16.♘xg5 ♘xd4 (16...hxg5 17.h6 ♗h8 18.h7+ ♔g7 19.♗xg5 is completely bad for Black) 17.♘e4 with a big advantage for White.

Here Black has a difficult choice. He doesn't want to play 14...h5, as this is a very serious positional concession. For a Grünfeld player this move looks horrible – it gives up the very important g5-square. Although the computer likes the move, for a competent player it is intolerable. There only remains the move in the game or 14...♖d8, on which there follows 15.♗g5, when the black rook begins rushing around the board. I will not give all the variations, of course, but I will merely say that here everything is not so simple.

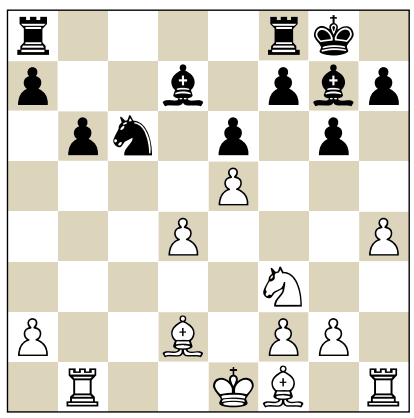


15.♖b1!

An essential subtlety. If immediately 15.h5, then after 15...♖fc8 16.♖b1 ♖c7 Black defends the pawn and intends to double his rooks on the c-file. It took me a long time to realize the importance of the immediate 15.♖b1. I remember how in Mallorca Illescas and I analysed this position before the match with Kasparov – I without a computer, and he with one. I realized, of course, that there was interesting play in prospect, but the computer constantly gave 'plus-equal' and the absence of an attack. Psychologically it was not easy, especially since White's position appealed to me.

15...b6

The most natural. Here Black has a whole range of moves – from the defence of the pawn by 15...♖ab8 to, for example, ignoring it (15...♖ad8 or 15...♖fd8). I will simply summarize: Black is fighting for equality, and there is no question of him seizing the initiative.



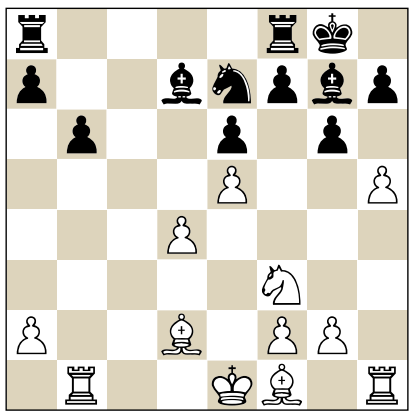
16.h5

At the board, playing 'at sight', it is

difficult for Black to defend such a position: on every move there is a choice. For example, here it is not easy to decide whether 17.h6 is a strategic threat, since if I am able to place my pawn on f4, Black will effectively be playing without his bishop. If 17.h6 is threatened, it means that the rook must be moved, but if not, then 16...♘e7 should be played. I thought that my opponent would move his rook from f8, even if just in case – 16...♖fc8. Then 17.hxg6, and after 17...hxg6 (capturing with the f-pawn is strategically unpleasant) in some cases Black can be mated on the h-file. The position, strangely enough, is middlegame in character, and even with a computer it is not easy to analyse.

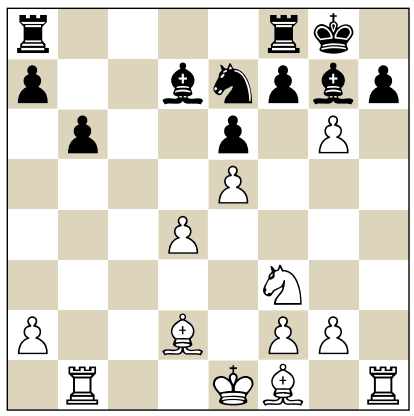
16...♘e7

The main move in my analysis.



17.hxg6

Quite quickly played. 17.h6 also comes into consideration. After 17...♗h8 18.♗b4 ♖fe8 19.♗xe7 ♖xe7 20.♗a6 (or 20.♖c1) Black has a terrible bishop on h8, but if he can break up the centre he will simply stand better. And although there is no 100% certainty that Black is alright in this variation, the resulting position needs to be very deeply analysed. But somehow immediately I aimed for the continuation in the game.

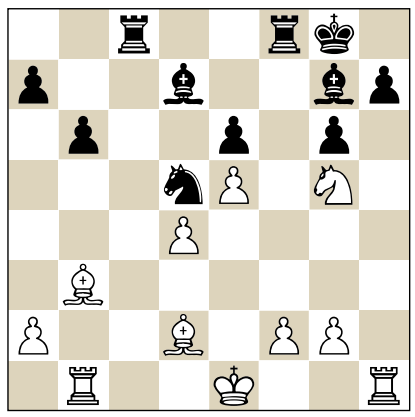


17...fxg6?!

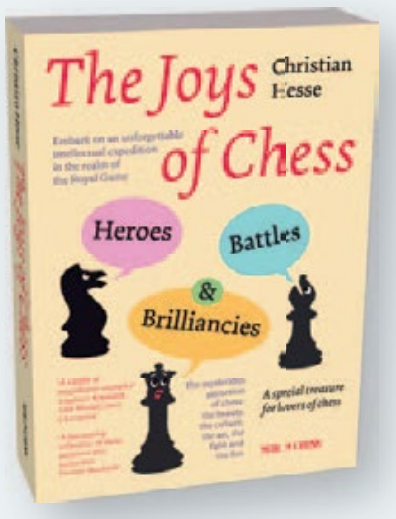
This move was made after a long think. Now Black's position is really unpleasant. After 17...hxg6 18.♘g5 Anish did not see a direct mate, and indeed there isn't one. But White has promising opportunities for combining positional play with an attack on the h-file. In a word, things are dangerous for Black, but nevertheless that is what he should have played. But Anish apparently decided: what will be, will be, the main thing is not to get mated. However, there are different types of players: some prefer strategic danger to tactical, while for others it is vice versa – it is better to come under an attack, but at least not create any weaknesses. When I was working with Kasparov in 1995, he liked the definition 'literally plus-equal'. After 17...fxg6 such an assessment is appropriate. The opponent can no longer undermine my centre by ...f7-f6, thereby Black's position loses its flexibility, and in addition the e6 pawn becomes weak.

18.♗c4 My home analysis came to an end, and I began playing, so to speak, spontaneously – it looks so logical to place the bishop on b3.

18...♖ac8 19.♗b3 ♘d5 20.♘g5



Taking the knight to d6 via e4. It is amusing that the computer's assess-



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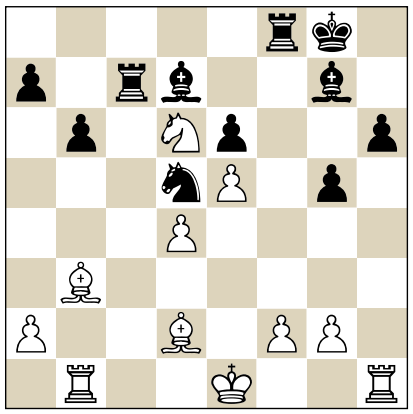
ment of this position is a very small advantage for White. But when I enter the moves from the game, its optimism begins to diminish and at some point it suddenly disappears. A typical 'literally plus-minus'!

20...h6 21.♘e4 g5 At least Black has somewhat expanded his living space.

22.♘d6 ♖c7 22...♖c6 was perhaps more interesting, in order possibly to give up the exchange on d6. However, then White has other arguments – ♗a4, for example. I think that Anish did not yet fully appreciate how difficult his position was.



23.♔e2!

White has two plans: to try and seize control of the c-file, which with his knight on d6 will become a decisive factor, or double rooks on the h-file and capture on h6. The move played works for both of these plans.

23...♖d8 Black plays in accordance with the first line of the computer, but during the game I thought that 23...♗e8 made sense, although after the simple 24.♖bc1 White continues to build up his advantage.

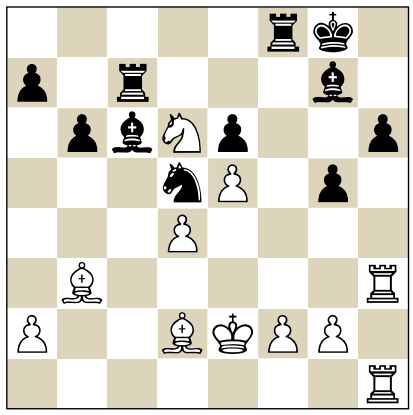
24.♖h3 ♗c6

I would have preferred the more logical 24...♗f8. However, even in this case I do not see anything sensible for Black – 25.♖bh1 a5 26.a4 with the threat of giving up the exchange on h6, breaking into the opponent's position and beginning to mop up his pawns.

25.♖bh1 ♖f8

This gives White an additional option, which I decided to make use of – because, being old and lazy, I did not want to have to calculate variations...

Dortmund 2011										cat. XX
				1	2	3	4	5	6	TPR
1 Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS	2781	* *	½ ½	1 ½	1 ½	1 0	1 1	7 2870
2 Le Quang Liem	IGM	VIE	2715	½ ½	* *	1 ½	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	5½ 2770
3 Ruslan Ponomariov	IGM	UKR	2764	0 ½	0 ½	* *	1 0	1 1	½ ½	5 2724
4 Anish Giri	IGM	NED	2701	0 ½	½ ½	0 1	* *	½ ½	1 ½	5 2737
5 Hikaru Nakamura	IGM	USA	2770	0 1	½ ½	0 0	½ ½	* *	½ 1	4½ 2687
6 Georg Meier	IGM	GER	2656	0 0	½ ½	½ ½	0 ½	½ 0	* *	3 2597



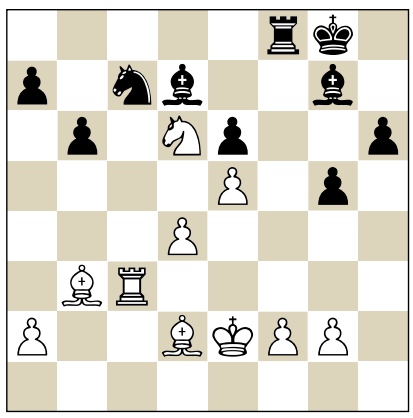
26.♖c1

The immediate 26.♖xh6 ♗xh6 27.♖xh6 ♘f4+ 28.♗xf4 ♖xf4 29.♖xe6 was also very strong, when Black's position disintegrates. But 26.♖c1 essentially removes all questions, and also from the aesthetic point of view the move is pretty: first the white rooks were doubled on the h-file, and now the same is done on the c-file. I love such pendulum-like movements of the rooks, which break up the opponent's position!

26...♗d7

Strictly the only square (27.♗xd5 exd5 28.♖hc3 was threatened). After any other move by the bishop there would have followed 27.♗xd5, and after 27...♖xc1 – 28.♗xe6+.

27.♖xc7 ♘xc7 28.♖c3

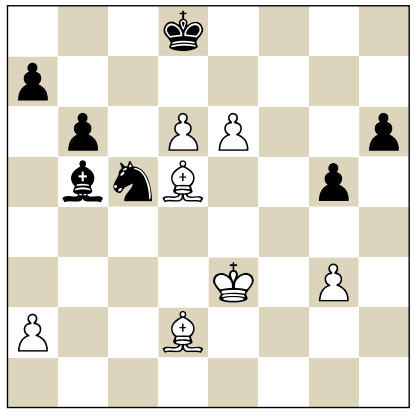


28...♘a6 Other knight moves are also hopeless: 28...♘e8 29.♘xe8 (the computer immediately concludes the game with 29.♘c8) 29...♖xe8 30.♖c7 ♗b5+ 31.♔e3, or 28...♘b5 29.♘xb5 ♗xb5+ 30.♔e3 ♖e8 31.♖c7. Some purely practical chances of continuing the fight would have been retained by 28...♘d5 29.♗xd5 exd5 30.♖c7 ♖d8 31.♖xa7.

29.g3 ♖d8 After 29...g4 the computer suggests the unhurried manoeuvre ♗d1-♔e1-♗e2, but I would probably have preferred 30.♖c1 with the threat of ♖h1 and ♗xh6.

30.f4 The rest is simple, although I missed Black's 39th move.

30...♗f8 31.f5 ♗xd6 32.exd6 ♗b5+ 33.♔e3 ♖xd6 34.fxe6 ♔f8 35.♖c8+ ♔e7 36.d5 ♖d8 37.♖xd8 ♔xd8 38.d6 ♘c5 39.♗d5

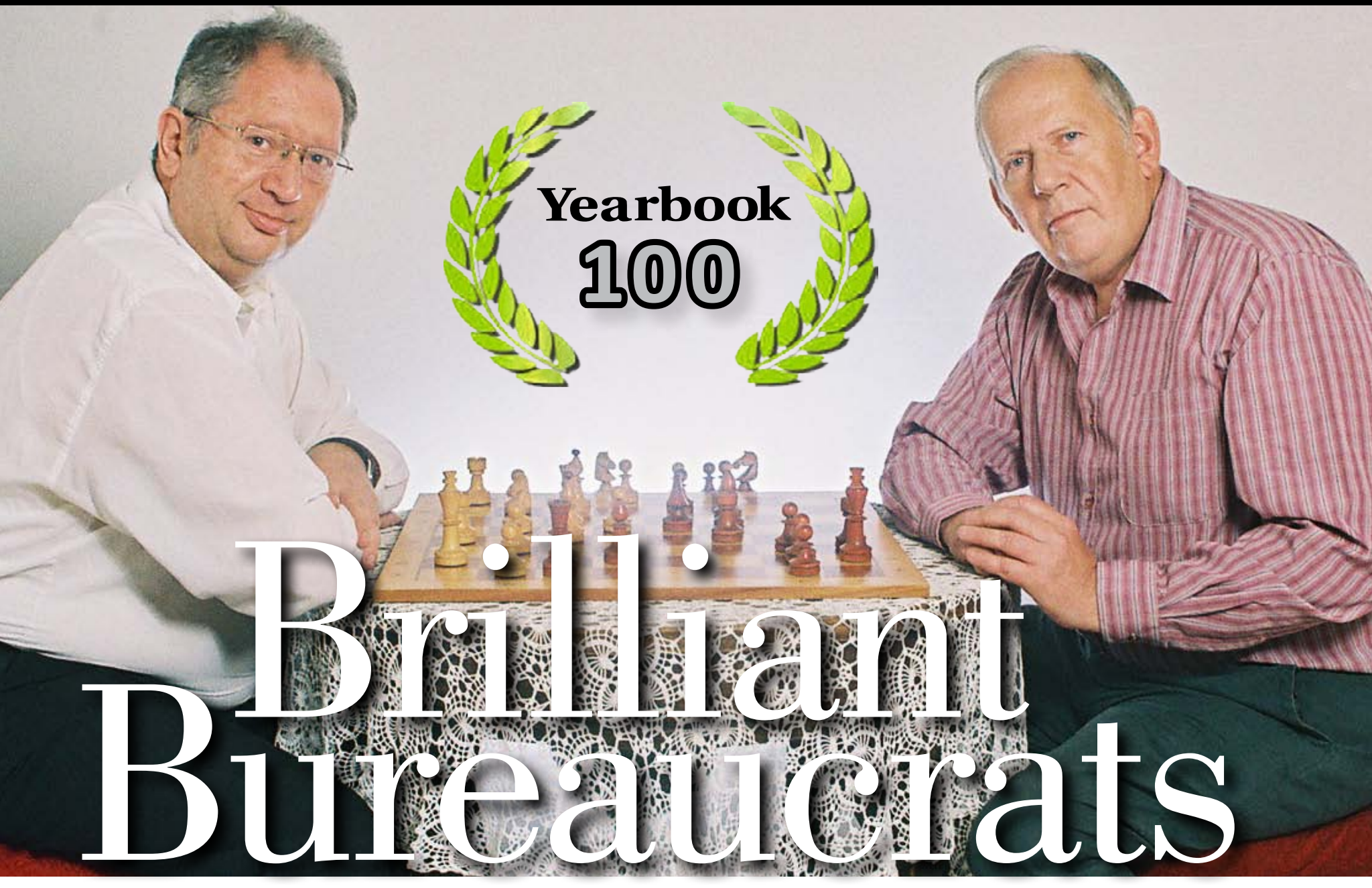


39...♗d7 40.exd7 ♔xd7

Here I experienced some anxious feelings, associated with my game against Carlsen (London 2010), where I failed to win an ending with an extra piece. After the game Anish remarked that he did not resign, because he was hoping for something similar...

41.♔d4 ♔xd6 42.♗b4 a5 43.♗xc5+ bxc5+ 44.♔c4

Black resigned. ■

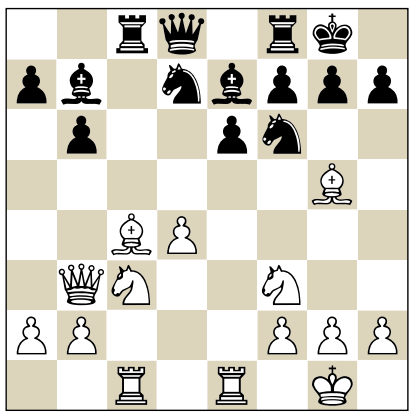


Brilliant Bureaucrats

by Peter Boel

NI 4.8 – E53
Vladimir Kramnik
Garry Kasparov
London 2000 (10)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗d3 d5 6.♘f3 c5 7.0-0 cxd4 8.exd4 dxc4 9.♗xc4 b6 10.♗g5 ♗b7 11.♖e1 ♘bd7 12.♖c1 ♖c8 13.♕b3 ♗e7 In this quiet Nimzo-Indian line Kramnik suddenly launched a winning combination:



14.♗xf6! ♘xf6?! 14...♗xf6 15.♘b5 ♗xf3 16.♕xf3 a6 – Illescas in New In Chess 2000/8, page 60. **15.♗xe6! fxe6 16.♕xe6+ ♔h8 17.♕xe7 ♗xf3 18.gxf3 ♕xd4 19.♘b5 ♕xb2 20.♖xc8 ♖xc8 21.♘d6 ♖b8 22.♘f7+ ♔g8 23.♕e6 ♖f8 24.♘d8+ ♔h8 25.♕e7** Black resigned.

An amazing game for a World Championship. Even more amazingly, the entire line had been played before – by Hungarian theoretician Laszlo Hazai, in one of his last tournament games, against Henrik Danielsen in Välby 1994. And the way for Black to prevent this disaster was also known: 13...♗xc3!, as played by Bartlomiej Macieja against Peter Lukacs, Budapest 1996.

Laszlo Hazai and Peter Lukacs had written a Survey about this line together in Yearbook 44 (1997). This goes to show that if you do not read the Surveys written by these two eminent theoreticians from Budapest, you'd better watch your step – even if you are the World Champion.

'A while before that 1994 game we had analysed this position for Boris Gelfand', Hazai recalls. 'At that time Gelfand was a very good friend of Kramnik's. My guess is that he showed the line to Kramnik. Apparently Kasparov didn't know it. He must have looked only at games of players with 2500 Elo and upwards, and I was below 2500 then.' It may have been even worse: in the above-mentioned issue of New In Chess, Illescas wrote: 'I guess neither player was aware of that game!'

As a tandem, Lukacs and Hazai are a chess opening institution. The two of them together cover everything that starts with 1.e4 and 1.d4. Roughly put, Hazai (58) specializes in 1.e4 with white, Lukacs (61) in 1.d4. With black, Lukacs's repertoire is more Kramnik-oriented (1.e4 e5, and after 1.d4, the Slav or the Meran), whereas Hazai specializes in Kasparovian openings

Laszlo Hazai (l.) and Peter Lukacs, 'the Popes of Chess Theory'.

like the Sicilian and the King's Indian. They are also regular suppliers of new opening lines to Judit Polgar and current World Championship Candidate Boris Gelfand, as well as coaches of up-and-coming talents like Richard Rapport, currently the 4th youngest grandmaster in the world.

In 1985, during a tournament in Yugoslavia, Australian grandmaster Ian Rogers was watching a complex Spanish game between Hazai and the great Czech theoretician Vlastimil Jansa. He saw that Hazai had one hour more on the clock. 'Then I offered a draw in a good position, as I often did in those days', Hazai recounts. 'Rogers won the tournament and invited me to come and work with him in Australia. I went there, we worked together and played a few tournaments. Those were good times. We stayed in contact over the years. Rogers, who was travelling a lot as a player in those days, told me that there was a new magazine called New In Chess, which paid well for articles. That sounded quite attractive for someone who wanted to earn his living with chess in a socialist country like Hungary.'

Hazai offered to work for New In Chess together with Peter Lukacs. They had become friends in 1977, when they prepared for the European Team Championship in Moscow. 'In the training camp we had long walks', Lukacs reminisces. 'We discussed many themes and agreed on many issues. Before that we hadn't had such high opinions of each other, mainly because we didn't know each other and we had a lot of prejudices.'

The Hungarian team came second in 1977, and again in 1980. Hazai didn't play much and didn't return after 1980, but Lukacs stayed on the team, which won the gold medal in 1982. At that time many Hungarian players worked in teams. Andras Adorjan, Zoltan Ribli and Gyula Sax were a successful analytical threesome, which eventually gained Hungary the gold medal in the 1978 Olympiad. From 1981 to 1989 Hazai and Lukacs formed a team with Sax and Ivan Farago. As a result of this cooperation, Sax became a Candidate twice.

Long-time Yearbook supervisor René Olthof calls them 'The Popes of Chess Theory'. Peter Lukacs and Laszlo Hazai are not only world-class trainers – they have also written 10 theoretical articles and 118 Surveys for our New In Chess Yearbook series. This September sees the publication of Yearbook 100. A noteworthy anniversary and a splendid occasion for a chat with these two oracles from Budapest.

In 1986 Lukacs and Hazai started their work for New In Chess Magazine with two fabulous theoretical articles: one on the Zaitsev Variation of the Ruy Lopez (1986/7) and one on the Queen's Gambit Accepted (1987/5), about the piece sacrifice in the game Tal-Karolyi (Tbilisi 1986). Soon they started writing theoretical articles for the new Yearbooks, and after the Surveys were introduced in Yearbook 16 (1990), they wrote one on the Sämisch King's Indian after the Spassky-Polgar match in Budapest. Their articles are aimed at strong club players who are interested in the latest developments. 'But we hope that professionals can also benefit from our work', Lukacs adds modestly.

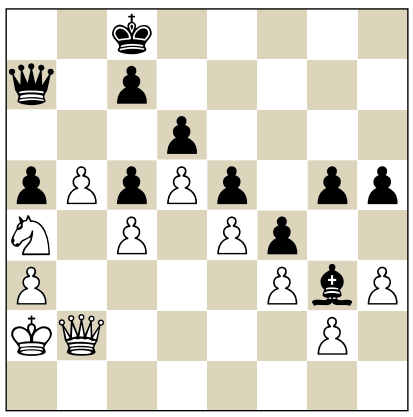
This modest workmanlike mentality seems to characterize both Lukacs and Hazai. By way of illustration: the latter's official name is Hazay. The 'y' suggests noble birth, and indeed Laszlo's great-grandfather was a baron and a Minister of Defence during the first World War. As an eight-year-old, Laszlo read a lot: 'Poems and novels by the best Hungarian authors, who fought for the revolution and against the privileges of the nobility in the 19th century. So I decided to change the 'y' into an 'i' to express my sympathy for the working class.' He always wrote his name like that in chess circles, and he never changed it back.

In the 1980s, when their careers as coaches and chess authors started to flourish, Hazai, then an International Master in his early thirties, no longer believed in a career as a chess player: 'I was too nervous, too frightened. I was a coward.'

'I am rather proud that I drew twice with Mikhail Tal,' he continues. 'But what is less well known is that my grandfather had the same score against Tal! He worked for the Hungarian chess federation. When Tal played in Miskolc in 1963, he visited the office and asked if there was anyone who wanted to play blitz. All the grandmasters were away, only my grandfather was there. He was quite old by then and only a candidate master, but a very passionate and strong blitz player. He beat Tal in the first game and lost the

second. When Tal put up the pieces for a third game, my grandfather said "No no, I've had enough!" and that's how he kept the score level.'

Hazai's own best known chess achievement is the following miracle save in the final round of a youth tournament:



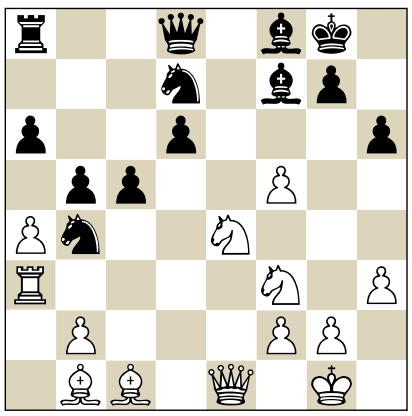
Arzhak Petrosian-Laszlo Hazai
Schilde 1970

1...♕b6!! 2.♘xb6+? As Tim Krabbé pointed out, White could have refused the queen, exerting pressure on the a5 pawn with ♕d2, ♔b3 and then bringing his knight to b3 and his king to a4. **2...cxb6 3.h4** Preventing the immediate blockade 3...gxh4. **3...gxh4 4.♕d2 h3! 5.gxh3 h4** and a couple of moves later the draw was agreed. Rybka still doesn't get what's going on here, but Petrosian did. 'He literally cried,' Hazai remembers. 'If he had won the game, he would have won the tournament. Now he wouldn't be sent abroad for the next couple of years, which was a disaster. I was 17, he was 16, and I understood his grief. He was a better player than me; I was just lucky here.'

Peter Lukacs used to be a much more fanatical player. He won the national Hungarian title in 1980 and the grandmaster title in 1986. 'Good opening preparation was my strong point. At that time I beat two strong players with the same 5.♗f4 line in the Grünfeld, which would be impossible today because of the information revolution. In 1988 I prepared all day for my game against Ivanchuk, but then it seemed that we would not play because Ivanchuk had had an accident during a football match before the game, hurting his wrist quite badly. However, Vasily wanted to fight anyway. Then he refuted my analysis over the board and won a nice game.'

RL 26.7 – C92
Vasily Ivanchuk
Peter Lukacs
Debrecen 1988

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♖e8 10.d4 ♗b7 11.♘bd2 ♗f8 12.a4 h6 13.♗c2 exd4 14.cxd4 ♘b4 15.♗b1 c5 16.d5 ♘d7 17.♖a3 f5 18.exf5 ♖xe1+ 19.♕xe1 ♗xd5 20.♘e4 20.♘h2 ♘f6 21.♘g4 ♗e7 22.♘e4 ♘xg4 23.hxg4 ♗f6, draw (44), Pavlovic-Hazai, Vrnjacka Banja 1988! **20...♗f7**



21.f6 g6 22.♘h4 d5 23.♖g3 ♕e8 24.♘xg6 ♗xg6 25.f7+ ♕xf7 26.♘d6 Black resigned.

'I used to walk around too much during games – my concentration level was too low,' Lukacs admits. 'When I broke my leg, my results became much better.' In the European Championships in Debrecen 1992 he scored the best result in the Hungarian team. 'But then I got married and my wife didn't like me being abroad for so long, playing tournaments. She suggested that I become a trainer instead of a professional player. At that time I rejected the suggestion, but later I did follow it up.'

Lukacs continued playing actively until about seven years ago, but he also worked as a coach for many players, including Zsofia Polgar, Sax, Farago, Jozsef Pinter, Robert Ruck, Peter Acs, Kristian Szabo and Richard Rapport. He recalls that in 2001, Acs, on his way to the junior world title, beat Postny and Bu Xiangzhi in the final rounds using variations by him and Hazai.

In 1989 Hazai started to work with the two youngest Polgar sisters, Judit and Zsofia. He had stopped playing by then – without any regrets, as he says.

After a six-year interval Hazai rejoined Judit Polgar in 2000. 'Since then we have been working together on all aspects of the game: high-level openings but also game analyses and endgames. I really like endgames. Perhaps I will write a book on them one day. Opening books for professionals are almost impossible to write these days; you have to stick to one aspect, you can never grasp the whole.'

Since 1992 both of them have also worked with Boris Gelfand: 'Sometimes we have training camps, and in recent years we have regularly sent him opening material.'

An author of theoretical articles who is also a coach can sometimes face a dilemma when he has to write about a line a pupil is holding up his sleeve for top-level use. 'In that case we only give the first move of a line, and write something like "This is interesting"', Hazai laughs. 'A while ago I was amazed when I saw an analysis by Ivanchuk in *Informator*, which contained many new and brilliant lines. Everybody said, why didn't he just write "Also interesting is..." there? But I suppose Ivanchuk can do anything, new ideas just keep popping up out of his head.'

The most important characteristic of a good theoretician is enthusiasm, thinks Hazai. 'This work is my passion. I always want to discover the truth, although you can never find the definite truth. But at least we want to go deeper and deeper. You must also like "manual work": making notes, copying and pasting, analysing, looking everywhere for new material. You're something of a collector, actually. But you must also be a kind of bureaucrat to like this work. There are many play-

ers with brilliant ideas who lack this bureaucratic quality. Of course you must also have some minimum level, you have to understand what's going on. We don't study games by players rated lower than 2400, except with very tactical lines. I have analysed with many strong players. With Gyula Sax, for instance. He is a fantastic tactician, and we complemented each other well. I have learned a lot from him.'

What Lukacs likes best about chess is its scientific aspect. 'That is the heritage of our great predecessors Barcza and Portisch. I was also greatly influenced by Botvinnik's games and analyses. I always enjoyed preparing for a game: who is smarter? Who understands the opening finesses better? Who makes the best decisions?'

Hazai and Lukacs both live in Budapest. It's a 20-minute walk between their houses, so they visit each other once every week if they are at home. 'Then we write articles, analyse opening variations and chat about everything else,' says Lukacs. The material for the Surveys comes from both sides. The one who has the best knowledge of a specific opening supplies the most material. If neither of them knows much about it, they divide the research fifty-fifty.

'In the old days we had notes on openings on paper, which weighed about 30 kilos in total!' remembers Lukacs. 'We put it all on disc in a couple of years – all our work fits on one small disc. If we get a new opening book or a good article, we immediately add the new information. This is a lot of manual work, but it is our duty towards our pupils, to save them precious time. And we also get excellent material from them. Everybody benefits from these exchanges.' All variations are obviously checked with the computer, but Hazai warns that the first look should always be on the board itself. 'Do not just pick a move from a list of computer lines – use your own brains. This is important, especially for young players. It's better to study a worse line well than just to reproduce a better computer line.'

Lukacs and Hazai describe working on opening theory as 'a never-ending story'. 'Ideas cannot be fresh forever,' Hazai explains. 'You always work for today and tomorrow only. This is not frustrating; it's just how life is. Chess changes so rapidly. After six months without study you cannot just play your old line. That can be a terrible trap.'

They do not fear that chess will be analysed out or fizzle out in lifeless draws. Hazai: 'We don't have to change the rules; they are fine. In Kazan, Alexander Grischuk aimed for the rapid and blitz games because that was his forte. If you don't want that, change the format of your event, not the chess rules. There is always the threat of a draw offer, but that is a psychological aspect that belongs to this mind sport. Moreover, there are already far fewer pre-arranged draws than in the 1960s and '70s. These days the top-20 are all tough fighters. If you play for a draw too often, you will just drop out of the elite.'

The Theory Popes aren't afraid that computers will cause them to lose their jobs either. At a young age, Lukacs thought that one day he would know everything about openings and get to 'the final truth'. 'Nowadays we can only smile at this, but at the time it seemed possible! Now I just believe in hard work. Since most chess players do not have an extraordinary talent, working hard is the only way for them to improve.'

'The players who quit chess are always the ones that are pessimistic about its future,' Hazai claims. 'We are not pessimistic at all. We've quit playing but we haven't quit chess. We work eight to 10 hours a day on it. By the way, we don't regard it as work. If it was work, it would be disastrous!' ■

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Harmonious Armenia tops favourites

Vladimir Barsky

VLADIMIR BARSKY

Once again the Armenian team reaped the fruits of determination, unity and friendship. (L. to r.) Robert Hovhannisyan, Sergei Movsesian, Vladimir Akopian, team captain Arzhak Petrosian, Gabriel Sargissian and Levon Aronian.

The World Team Championships have been organized since 1985. The first seven were held once every four years, like the football World Cup. Two years ago FIDE opted for a two-year cycle for this prestigious tourney. Ningbo, a rapidly growing seaport city in Eastern China, welcomed an elite field for the eighth World Teams. The nine top teams on the planet took part plus African champion Egypt. Armenia once again demonstrated the importance of harmony and friendship in team events. Led by Levon Aronian, the team of Arzhak Petrosian claimed first place without a single defeat ahead of China and Ukraine. Top-rated Russia had another lacklustre result. Their fourth place prompted team captain Evgeny Bareev to resign from his post.

Ningbo

In recent years China has hosted a number of chess events in the most varied cities around the country. Ningbo, a city 200 kilometres south of Shanghai, got the World Team Championships. By Chinese standards Ningbo is a quiet, provincial town. For Europe it would be huge, with a population of over 5.5 million. The players lived and played in a five-star hotel on the outskirts of the city, where this impressive number of residents isn't obvious at all – the skyscrapers are located at a reasonable distance from each other and between them there are beautiful parks or just neatly-trimmed greenery.

Ningbo is a young city, and you can tell that it's fairly wealthy – it's the commercial and fishing centre of the whole region. The restaurant at the New Century Grand Hotel Ningbo, where the players were presented with a Swedish buffet three times a day, was groaning with seafood: calamari, octopus, prawns, crab, oysters, not to mention the more common fish and sushi.

There was also an excellent fitness centre at the hotel with a big swimming pool and sauna, and pool and ping-pong tables. To sum up, all the conditions for a real holiday. Far from everyone dared go outside: summer in Ningbo is not only very hot, but because of the high humidity it's also unbearably clammy.

The championships took place in a sufficiently spacious and cool conference hall. To demonstrate its resoluteness in the battle against cheating, FIDE compelled the organizers to post a security guard with a metal detector in front of the entrance to the hall. Of course, this was an empty formality – the toilets, for example, were outside the playing zone and were shared by players and spectators, and the spectators could bring whatever they wanted with them right up to a machine-gun (as Rustam Kasimdzhanov put it). Thankfully there were no suspicions that anyone cheated. The 'zero tolerance' rule was also in effect at the tournament, which the Russian team almost fell afoul of at one point: Ian Nepomniachtchi decided to lie down for a little while after lunch and accidentally fell asleep. Fortunately our coaches suddenly remembered him just in time and woke the grandmaster up; Ian came into the tournament hall 40 seconds before the clocks started.

The Russian team was the ratings favourite for the tournament, as usual. Our leader Vladimir Kramnik had gone to Dortmund, and in his absence head coach Evgeny Bareev entrusted first board to Sergey Karjakin. He had good reasons for that decision: Sergey occupied the fourth spot in the world rankings (above Kramnik), and had just shared 1st-2nd place with Magnus Carlsen at the tournament in Bazna. But he really didn't have any experience playing on first board, and that doesn't just mean the strongest opponents, but also a special responsibility, the burden of leadership. Karjakin had a hard time in his new role – he lost two games with four draws.

Azerbaijan brought a very strong and ambitious team. Their new head coach Vladimir Tukmakov managed to smooth out some internal conflicts and bring Vugar Gashimov back to the team (Gashimov had signed a contract to play in Biel, but he managed to resolve that issue). Mamedyarov, Gashimov, Radjabov – those grandmasters should have sat at the board in that order, in accordance with their ratings. But after the pairings Mamedyarov was afraid to play five games as Black, including against Aronian, Karjakin and Leko, and he asked to be switched down. After some to-ing and fro-ing Teimour Radjabov agreed to take on the role of leader (and he coped with it very successfully), but to all appearances the internal equilibrium on the team seemed to have been destroyed. Mamedyarov didn't shine on fourth board either, Rauf Mamedov performed poorly, and a conflict between Gashimov and Tukmakov also came out into the open. The resulting seventh place for the second team by average rating was a total failure, of course.

The two-time Olympic champions from Armenia didn't hide their ambitious plans either: they attracted Sergei Movsesian to their banner, and on the initiative of Levon Aronian they brought a psychologist to Ningbo, who was also a physi-

VLADIMIR BARSKY

Despite the return of Vugar Gashimov, the team of Azerbaijan did not shine in Ningbo.

cal trainer. The Armenian team is always distinguished by the extremely warm, almost family-like atmosphere within the collective. The Armenians automatically include their national champion in their team, but the young Robert Hovhannisyan is clearly weaker than the main four at the moment, so he sat out almost the entire tournament in reserve. They were only sixth by ratings, and playing really as a team of four, but in the end they didn't lose a single match and took first place with room to spare. A result worthy of admiration!

The hosts fielded the youngest team: Wang Hao and Li Chao are 22, Wang Yue is 24, and the other two are under 20. Wang Hao and Wang Yue are elite grandmasters, well known in Europe. They confirmed their class by winning on first and second boards. True, Wang Hao was very lucky, but it's always true that fortune smiles on the strongest. So China's second place was far from a sensation; another time they might even come first.

And now let's briefly talk about how the tournament battle went. There were no particular shocks at the start. Weakened by the absence of Nakamura (where was Hikaru? That same place – in Dortmund!), the U.S. team lost to Russia 1-3. Armenia gave Israel without Gelfand (Boris was recovering after his Kazan marathon) just half a point. Azerbaijan and China separated peacefully.

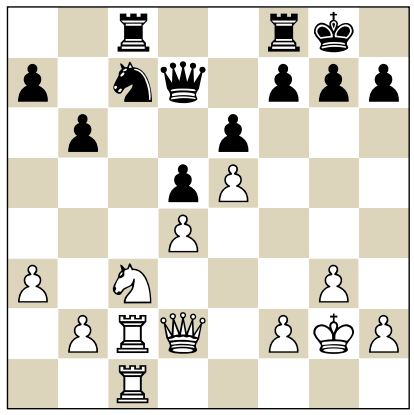
In the second round Russia defeated Hungary 3-1 and topped the tournament table. China beat Ukraine and Armenia shared a point with the USA. 'Karjakin & Co.' looked more than confident on those days, but by the third round an alarm bell was ringing for the favourites. In the Russia-Armenia match Sergey Karjakin pounced on a powerful novelty and immediately after the opening fell into a difficult position a pawn down. He defended very stubbornly and almost saved himself, but at the very end, by Sergey's own admission, his 'batteries ran out'... You will find this dramatic game against Aronian in the games section below.

VLADIMIR BARSKY

Vasily Ivanchuk is searched with a metal detector. 'This was an empty formality – the toilets, for example, were outside the playing zone and were shared by players and spectators.'

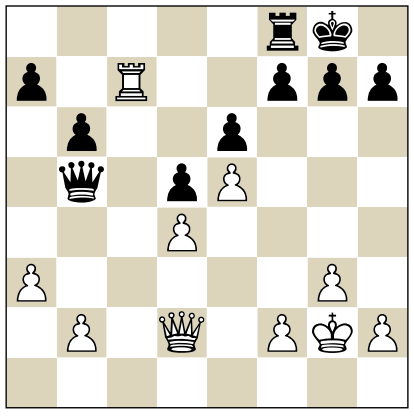
For the Russian team the 'moment of truth' came in the fourth round, when they lost to Azerbaijan (the first time in history, by the way) with a score of 1-3. In his favourite Jaenisch Gambit Radjabov got away from Karjakin with apparent ease. Grischuk forgot his home analysis, mixed everything up, and instead of getting a forced draw quickly lost to Gashimov. Mamedyarov surprised Nepomniachtchi with a French Defence; Ian cheerfully sacrificed two pawns (hardly completely correctly), then won them back and in a difficult position went for a repetition of moves.

Svidler had to save the match, but left alone (the other games had already finished), he got flustered and destroyed a slightly better position in a few moves. After that round the Armenian team found themselves in first place. The next day they cemented their leadership by beating the future silver medallists. The decisive point came from Gabriel Sargissian, who always plays in an inspired way for his national team and in my opinion produces better results than he does in individual tournaments.

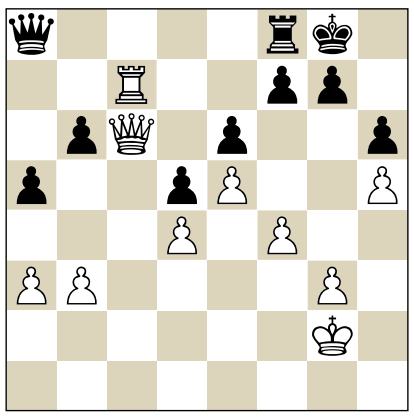


Sargissian-Yu Yangyi
position after 22.♖fc1

At first glance it might seem that White's advantage isn't all that big: a little more space and slight pressure on the c-file. But Black has an extremely poorly-positioned knight on c7, and it isn't easy to find it a job. For example, in the case of 22...f6 23.♘e2!? fxe5 24.dxe5 ♘a6 25.♘d4 ♘c5 26.f3!? the white knight finds itself an excellent square in the centre, but the black one is gradually being invited back home. An attempt to bring the knight into play via a8-b6 also looks unconvincing: 22...b5 23.♘e2 ♘a8 24.♖xc8 ♖xc8 25.♕a5 ♘b6 26.♖xc8+ ♘xc8 27.♘c3, and the pawns on the queenside start to 'scatter'.
The Chinese player decided to cut the Gordian Knot and exchange knights:
22...♘b5 23.♘xb5 ♖xc2 24.♖xc2 ♕xb5 25.♖c7

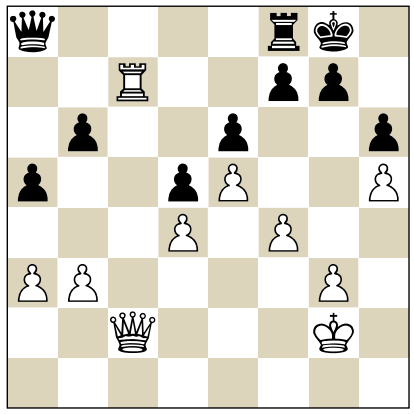


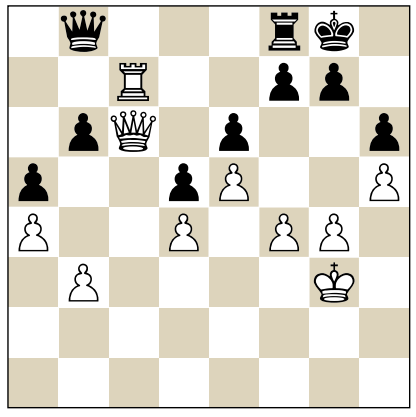
25...a5 Curiously, the computer liked this exchange operation at first. Only much later did it begin to understand that Black has an absolutely unpromising position: he doesn't have a hint of counterplay, while White reigns unchallenged on the open file and the seventh rank and can calmly prepare a pawn attack on the kingside.
26.♕c2 h6 27.h4 ♕a6 28.b3 ♕b5 29.h5 ♖d8 30.♖c6 ♖f8 31.f4 ♕a6 32.♖c7 ♕a8 33.♕c6!?



35.g4
White is continuing his main plan – attacking on the kingside. We should note that the standard undermining move f7-f6 (or f7-f5) doesn't work anywhere simply because of the exchange on f6.
35...♔h8 36.a4 ♔g8 37.♔f2 ♔h8 38.♕c6 ♕b8
Now already on 38... ♕a6 White could reply 39.♕b5, forcing an exchange of queens.
39.♔g3 ♔g8

33...♕a6
It was impossible to transfer to a rook endgame: after 33...♕xc6 34.♖xc6 ♖b8 the response 35.f5! exf5 36.♔f3 looks very strong – thanks to the activeness of his pieces (and most of all the complete passivity of his enemy), White should break through his opponent's defences. But now Black is threatening perpetual check, so Sargissian has to bring his queen back.
34.♕c2 ♕a8





40.g5! White has everything ready for the start of a decisive assault, and there isn't even any point in waiting for the time control.
40...hxg5 41.fxg5 ♕d8 42.♔g4
His Majesty personally leads the attack.
42...♔h8 43.♕b7 ♔g8 44.g6 ♕e8 45.♖e7
Black resigned. A clean win for Sargissian, a good textbook game!

Azerbaijan lost to Ukraine in the fifth round and were forced to say farewell to their dream of gold. On the other hand Hungary pulled themselves up by beating Israel 3½-½.

Then came the only rest day, on which the guests had a boat ride and were given souvenirs. And on the day

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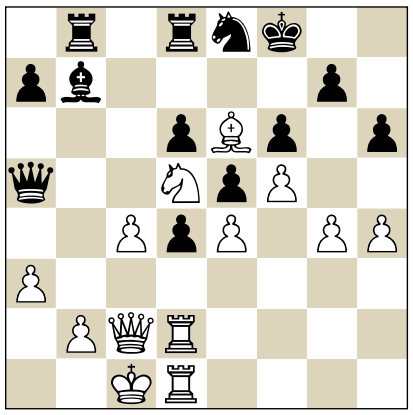
of the sixth round Judit Polgar celebrated her 35th birthday – the only beautiful lady in rough male company. The organizers prepared a surprise for the young woman: a huge bouquet of white lilies and a birthday cake were waiting for Judit in front of the entrance to the tournament hall.

Polgar arrived about 5-7 minutes before the clocks were started. This time she was allowed to skip the metal detector, was presented with the flowers and asked to light the flame on the decorative lotus flower that adorned the cake. Judit clicked the lighter, the lotus lit and 'blossomed' beautifully, and there was a small lighted candle on every petal. An impressive sight!

VLADIMIR BARSKY

On the day of her 35th birthday a huge bouquet of white lilies and a birthday cake were waiting for Judit Polgar in front of the entrance to the tournament hall.

Polgar was due to play black against Yasser Seirawan: the 50-year-old grandmaster rarely competes in events these days, but he got on the team not through connections but thanks to a high-enough rating (I've already noted that Nakamura went to Dortmund, and for some reason the Americans preferred to see Varuzhan Akobian in the role of coach). Yasser, of course, wished the young woman a happy birthday, but his play was no gift: he developed a very strong attack and won in excellent style.



Seirawan-Polgar
position after 28....cxd4

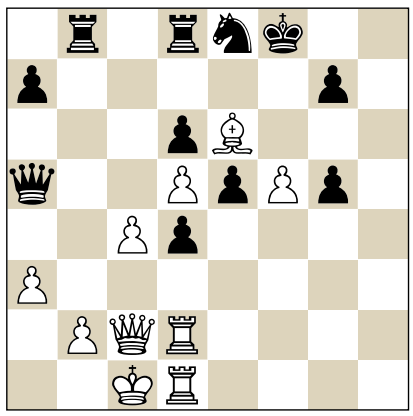
Obviously Polgar wasn't in the most appropriate mood for an uncompromising battle that day, she acted very passively and got an extremely tough position. White already has everything prepared for a breakthrough.

29.g5 ♗xd5

The knight on d5 can't be tolerated, of course, but now the b1-h7 diagonal opens up...

30.exd5 hxg5 31.hxg5 fxg5?

The decisive mistake. After 31...♖b7 32.♖h1 ♖db8 you wouldn't envy Black, but it's still possible to put up some kind of resistance.



32.f6!

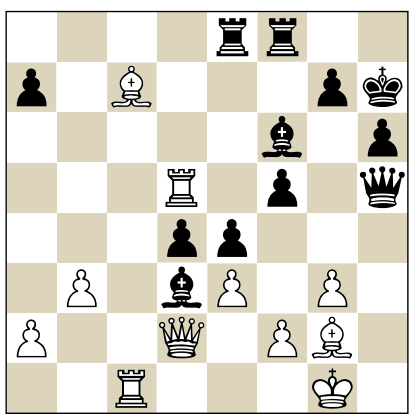
The diagonal has completely opened up, and Black has no defence against a queen invasion on g6 or h7, for example: 32...gxf6 33.♕h7 or 32...♘xf6 33.♕g6 ♕c7 34.♖h1. Polgar gave up her rook – **32...♖xb2** and soon admitted her defeat.

It's never easy to play on your birthday (a well-known example was Capablanca losing to Alekhine on the day of his 50th), and what's more, the intrigue with the lotus probably shook Polgar's state of mind. Be that as it may, when Vugar Gashimov celebrated his birthday during the next round he wasn't given either flowers or cake. On the other hand there was an amusing incident. Azerbaijan was playing the USA, and before the start of the round Seirawan went up to first board to greet Gata Kamsky, and asked for his autograph right there and then. Yasser sat down at the next board, where Gashimov was supposed to be playing. Gata burst out laughing and asked his old colleague if he wanted to stay there and wish Vugar a happy birthday while he was about it. Fortunately for Gashimov no substitutions took place and he made a draw with Onischuk.

And the laughing Kamsky and Seirawan overcame Radjabov and Mamedyarov that day. Shakh played extremely sharply as Black: it wasn't enough that he chose an extravagant opening (1.d4 c5 2.d5 f5!?), he also tried to force the position later on.

Armenia won in the sixth and seventh rounds, and in the eighth they drew their crucial match with Azerbai-

jan. Russia, though, had to part with their dreams of gold after a draw with Ukraine and a loss to China. This despite the fact that the match with the hosts began more than optimistically for Russia: Karjakin and Svidler obtained big advantages, and the two other games ended in draws fairly quickly. But getting into time-trouble Karjakin messed up and lost, and Svidler found himself in a drawn ending with opposite-coloured bishops, in which being two pawns up gave him only moral satisfaction.



Wang Hao-Karjakin
position after 29.♖d5

Black has conducted the first part of the game very strongly and adventurously, won a pawn and constrained his opponent on the kingside. Now the advantage was reinforced with the simple 29...dxe3 30.♕xe3 ♖c8, but Karjakin wants more.

29...♖c8 30.exd4 ♕f7 31.♕a5

At first I thought that Sergey had overlooked this move, but he talked me out of it and explained that Black could get a big, virtually decisive advantage.

31...♗g5

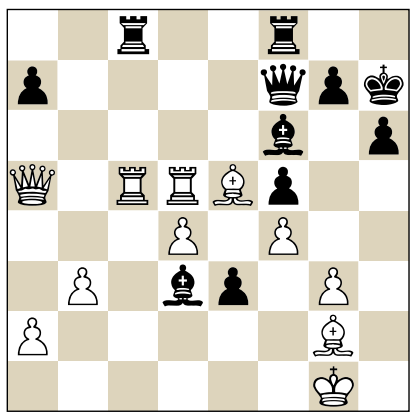
It was stronger to start with 31...e3 32.fxe3 and only now play 32...♗g5, creating an attack on the white king. After 33.♕d2 ♖xc7 34.♖xc7 ♕xc7 35.♕xd3 ♕xg3 Black's threats – largely thanks to the opposite-coloured bishops on the board – are very dangerous.

32.♖cc5 e3 33.f4 ♗f6

And here 33...e2 34.♔f2 ♗e7 was correct, and Black's chances are better, as before.

34.♗e5

Just five moves ago the bishop couldn't even dream about such an advance 'via the fire exit'!



34...♗e7?

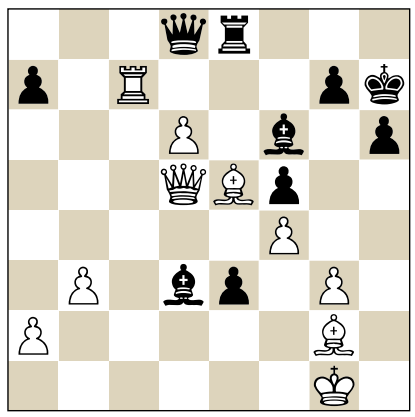
Now the scales are tipping towards White's side. Karjakin was hoping to seize the c-file, but those hopes weren't destined to be realized, and the bishop couldn't just be left on e5. After 34...♕g6 Black seems to have sufficient counterplay for a draw.

35.♖d7! ♕e8 36.♖xc8

36.♕xa7? didn't work because of 36...e2! 37.♔f2 ♕h5 threatening e1♕+ and ♕e2 mate, but instead of the move in the game, 36.♖xa7 looks to have been even stronger, with a big advantage.

36...♕xd7 37.♖c7 ♕d8 38.d5 ♗f6 39.d6 ♖e8 40.♕d5?

A terrible blunder on the flag (the time-trouble was mutual, and rather severe, considering the extremely tense nature of the position). 40.♕c3 preserved all the advantages of the position.



40...♗a6?

Karjakin misses a chance that has arisen by a miracle. After 40...e2 41.♔f2 ♗xe5 42.fxe5 ♕g5! 43.♕xd3 ♖xe5 44.♔e1 ♖e3 Black wins.

41.♕f7 ♖xe5

Now there's no longer time for 41...e2 because of 42.♕xg7+! ♗xg7 43.♖xg7+ ♔h8 44.♖e7+ ♔g8 45.♗d5+ ♔f8 46.♗g7 mate.

42.fxe5 e2 43.♔f2 ♕b8 44.♗b7

Black resigned.

VLADIMIR BARSKY

With a population of 5.5 million, Ningbo is a quiet, provincial town by Chinese standards.

Before the last round Armenia were two points ahead of Ukraine and China, and three ahead of Russia and Hungary. The fate of the medals was decided in the matches Armenia-Ukraine, China-Hungary and Russia-India. After about 2½ or 3 hours of play Armenia concluded a peace on all boards from a position of strength and won the gold as world champions for the first time. Our congratulations! China overcame Hungary and won the silver. A win for Russia with any score would have given them the bronze, but alas – again the favourites couldn't stand the pressure and lost their match to the Indians, in which by their ratings they should have scored at least 3-1. As a result the Ukrainians took third place.

For Russia, the winners of the last two World Championships, failing to get into the three prize positions was an extremely unpleasant surprise, a definite shock, although I personally am not inclined to dramatize the situation: we have a very strong team that currently doesn't have enough free-spiritedness in it, or supplies of luck.

I went to Ningbo at the invitation of the Russian Chess Federation and each evening I briefly interviewed the head coach of our team, grandmaster Evgeny Bareev. Summing up the results of the entire championships, he said, 'Naturally, each of us has to take a hard look at our performance. There are questions for me from the players, and there are questions from me to them. Right after the end of the championships I'm not ready to draw any conclusions, give evaluations or write prescriptions for successful play in our next tournaments. I don't know yet what we have to do to avoid a repetition of this scenario. For me as well as the players, all this was rather unexpected. It seems to me that the issue isn't the players' poor form; we can't say that we played badly. Usually our opponents played much worse, but they didn't make the last mistakes, and we regularly came out with horrible blunders and oversights.'

There's a rule in sport: it's the team that wins, but the coach that loses. Four days after returning to Moscow Evgeny Bareev tendered his resignation. As a person who sincerely cared about his country's team he thought that he hadn't succeeded in the job and placed all the blame upon himself.

NOTES BY
Levon Aronian

SL 8.4 – D45
Levon Aronian
Sergey Karjakin
Ningbo 2011 (3)

For every team a match with Russia is probably a special one. We made a mediocre start to the tournament, unexpectedly drawing with the American team weakened by the absence of Nakamura, in a match where for the first time in my life I lost to Kamsky. At the evening meeting my teammates said that I had the best winning chances, since I play well after a loss, and the more so after an unexpected loss.

I spent the whole morning preparing for the Queen's Indian Defence, and before the game I was still not sure how I would counter it.

1.d4 d5

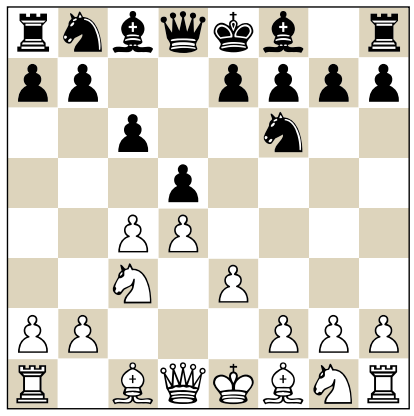
A pleasant surprise! At that moment I was angry with myself for not having repeated my idea in the Meran, but since I was impatient to employ it I decided to be brave.

2.c4 c6

In his youth Sergey played the Queen's Gambit Accepted, but after growing up he switched to more solid openings.

3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3

I adopt this move order when I want to go into the Meran. In the present turbulent times one can always find some scoundrel who will answer 4.♘f3 by capturing on c4 and after 5.a4 play ...e6, transposing into a set-up well known for its resilience.



4...e6

Roughly four years ago Sergey tried teaching me to play 4...a6 here. In return I showed him how to play basketball.

5.♘f3

The knight is usually developed here, and only the great experimenter Pashe Eljanov has managed after 5.b3 to develop the knight at e2 (Eljanov-Leko, Astrakhan 2010).

5...♘bd7 6.♕c2

Previously I played this only with the idea of continuing 6...♗d6 7.g4. Now I try to display aggression in a more veiled form.

6...♗d6

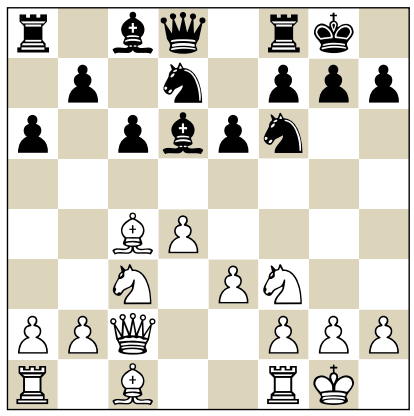
In this position Black can calmly play 6...b6, 6...a6 or even 6...g6.

7.♗d3 dxc4

Some players prefer to play strictly for a draw after 7...0-0 8.0-0 e5, but I think that such play is not in the style of my opponent.

8.♗xc4 0-0 9.0-0 a6

In recent times this position has occurred very frequently. 9...b5 is considered a more old-fashioned prescription.



10.e4

This move is usually used to transpose into well-known variations, but before the tournament in Kazan an interesting idea had occurred to me.

10...e5

The attempt to determine the position of the white bishop does not succeed, since after 10...b5 White gains an advantage by 11.♗xe6 fxe6 12.e5.

11.♖d1 ♕c7

In these positions the queen usually stands well on c7, especially since the h2 pawn is put under fire.

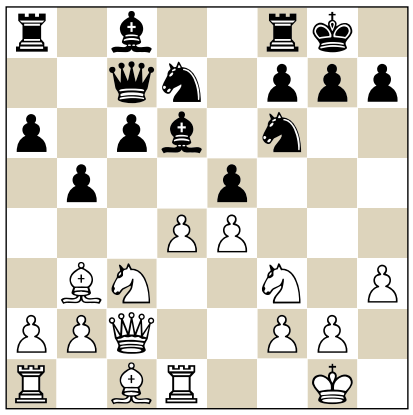
12.h3

In the event of the possible 12.g3 b5 13.♗e2 a theoretical tabiya arises.

12...b5

Apart from this move, Black has the possibility of relieving the tension in the centre by capturing on d4. This was how Anand played in 1991 against Kamsky.

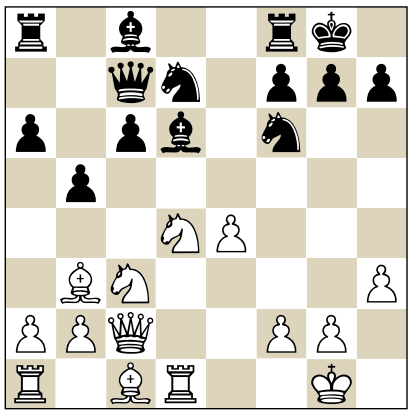
13.♗b3



It is around this move that White's entire play is built. In these variations it is rare for the bishop to be on b3. Sergei Movsesian and Hrant Melkumian, who looked at this variation with me, also did not rate the chess strength of this move very highly, but like me they thought that on first encountering such an original idea Black would not find things easy.

13...exd4 Black has a couple of reasonable continuations; the move played is the most natural.

14.♘xd4 After 14.♖xd4 ♘e5 White is in danger of ending up worse.



14...♘c5

Like a move earlier, Black has many acceptable possibilities. With the move in the game he tries to immediately put the bishop under guard. It should be mentioned that the attempt to trap the bishop by 14...c5 is unsuccessful in view of White's reply 15.♘d5.

15.♗g5

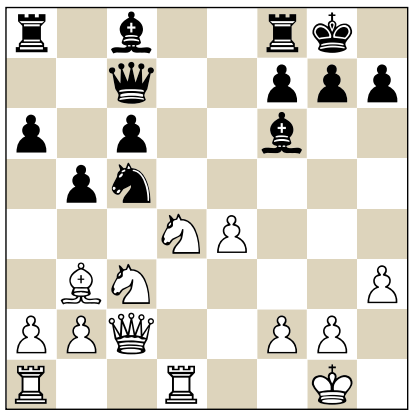
In view of the presence of tactical motifs, this move is correct. Now White has a threat which is easy to overlook. If it were White to move, he could capture on f6 and after ...gxf6 capture on c6, with the idea after ...♘xb3 of playing ♘d5. An antidote to this idea has to be found, and Sergey practically succeeded in this.

15...♗e5 16.♗xf6

In my analysis at home the main attention was focused on 15.♖ac1, but since I was not at all expecting to reach this position, I was already having to work things out for myself. After a short think I decided to go in for a forcing variation, analogous to a comparable combination in similar positions, which seemed promising to me.

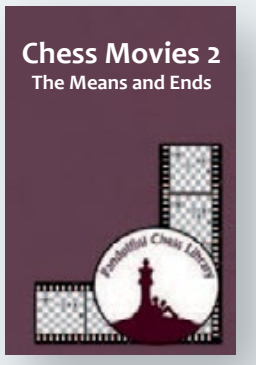
16...♗xf6

I suspect that my opponent did not see the combinative idea on the next move, but he cannot be reproached for this, as it is too unexpected for quiet Meran positions!



17.♘xc6 ♗b7

The correct decision. It was practically impossible to work out the consequences of the lines beginning after the possible forcing variation 17...♘xb3 18.♘d5 ♘xa1 19.♕c5 ♕b7 20.♘ce7+ ♗xe7 21.♘xe7+ ♔h8 22.♘g6+ hxg6 23.♕xf8+ ♔h7 24.♖d8 g5 25.♕h8+ ♔g6 26.♖g8 f5. Even the knowledge that the computer assesses the position as drawn would not tempt a strong player to go in for this continuation. The risk to White is insignificant, since at the worst he will find a perpetual check, whereas Black has to calculate far more vari-



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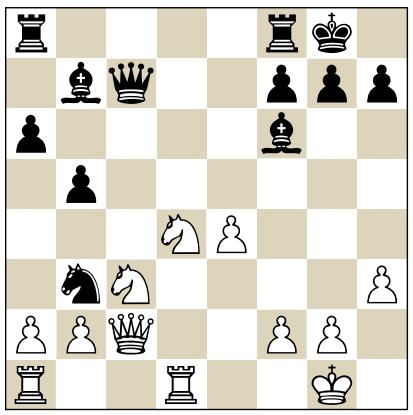
ations and endeavour to safeguard his exposed king.

18.♘d4

After 18.♘b4 I did not like the fact that Black can capture on b3 and after 19.♕xb3 regain his pawn by 19...♗xc3, which would give him good chances of equalizing.

18...♘xb3

During the game this seemed to be the only move, but, surprisingly enough, Black was not obliged to get rid of the fine-looking bishop on b3. After the strong move 18...♖ac8, White would have had to reconcile himself to the inevitable loss of his advantage.



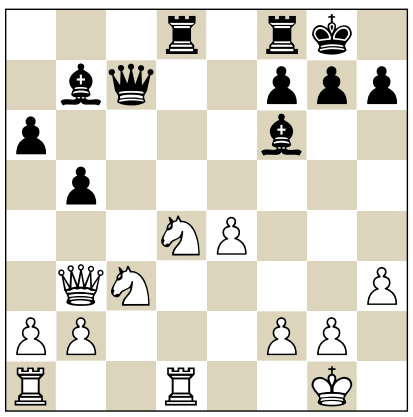
19.♕xb3

Now White is threatening to play ♘d5. At this moment I felt completely calm, since at the worst White has equality.

19...♖ad8

A mistake. Sergey decided to go totally onto the defensive, but the position demanded more active measures.

The queen manoeuvre 19...♕c5 20.♘de2 ♕e5 was a strong idea. In this way Black would emphasize the weakness of the pawns on e4 and b2 and would have good chances of compensation.



VLADIMIR BARSKY

‘Roughly four years ago Sergey tried teaching me to play 4...a6 here. In return I showed him how to play basketball.’

20.♘d5

Having ascertained that after 20...♕e5 21.♘xf6+ gxf6 22.♘f5 ♗xe4 (22...♖xd1+ 23.♖xd1 ♗xe4 is completely bad because of 24.♕g3+ ♕xg3 25.♘xg3 with a difficult ending for Black) 23.♖xd8 ♖xd8 24.♘h6+ ♔g7 25.♘xf7 ♗d5 26.♘xe5 ♗xb3 White is a pawn up with winning chances, I boldly played my knight forward, especially as there was no decent alternative.

20...♗xd5

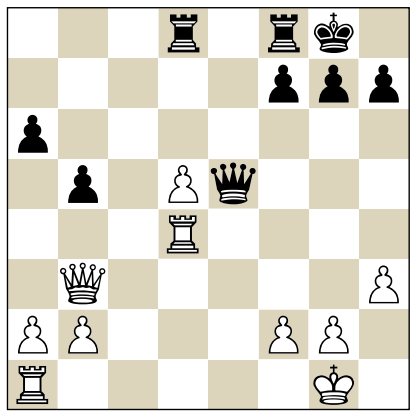
Apparently my opponent also did not relish the prospect of defending an unpleasant ending. With the move in the game Black transposes into a position which, though unpleasant to defend, is not easy to breach.

21.exd5 ♗xd4 22.♖xd4

Here there came to mind a game which I failed to win against Ivanchuk from Wijk aan Zee 2008, where with identical material I had an extra pawn on b4 and three pawns against three on the kingside. In that game I missed an opportunity to exchange one pair of rooks at the right time, after which I lost my winning chances. Since in this position too an exchange of rooks comes into my plans, I decided to create a similar structure.

22...♕e5

This is a more active blockade of the pawn than 22...♕d6.



23.♖ad1

After thinking a little about my plan for the next phase of the game, I remembered about the principle of two weaknesses, and I decided that with a rook on d6 it might not be very safe to begin advancing on the kingside. A desire to win the game by quieter means led to me trying the idea of a4.

23...♖d6 24.a4

It is hard to say who this exchange benefits, but in view of the fact that Sergey did not have much time left, I needed to try and set him some problems.

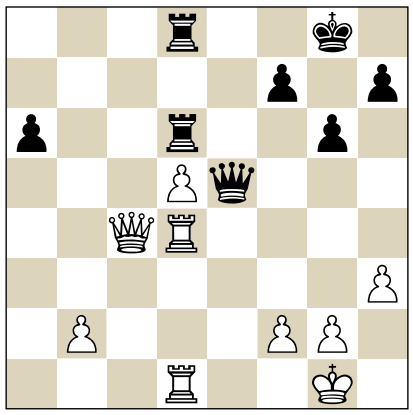
24...bxa4 25.♕xa4

First I decided to place my pawn on b4.

25...g6 26.♕c4

It is clearly unfavourable for Black to play ...a5, since for the defence of this pawn he would have to keep his rook on a8, leading to a completely passive position.

26...♖fd8



27.b4 To be honest, I did not see a clear plan for myself, but I did not feel terribly anxious. At the worst I had the reserve idea of exchanging the d5 pawn for the one on a6, which if correctly implemented could have given me good winning chances.

The match was going well for us: on board 2 Movsesian had drawn, on board 3 Akopian had an incomprehensible position against Nepomniachtchi, but looked confident, and on board 4 after imaginative play in the opening Sargissian had a promising position.

27...♕f5 After placing all his pieces correctly, Black can only wait.

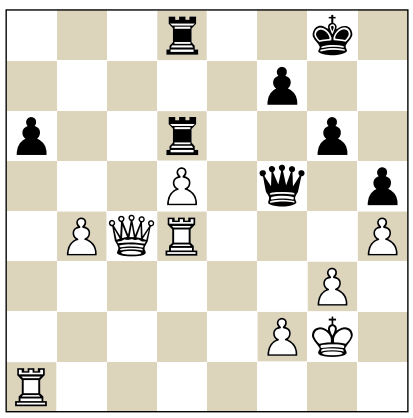
28.h4 In many heavy piece endings it is useful to have the f3-f4 squares for a rook. This move pursues this aim.

28...h5 29.g3

One of a series of waiting moves.

29...♔g7 30.♔g2 ♔g8 31.♖a1

Since there were still ten moves to the time control I decided to begin playing actively.



31...♖c8

Both now and on the next move it is unfavourable for Black to take on d5, on account of ♖f4 and the capture on a6. The active position of the rook on f4 gives White chances of success.

32.♕f1 ♕e5

32...♖c2 did not give anything special. I was planning to reply ♖ad1, with the idea of threatening an exchange by ♖c4.

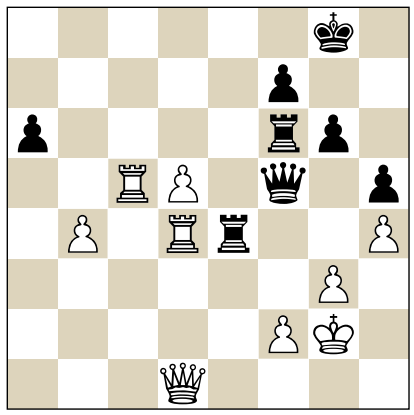
33.♕d1 ♖e8 34.♖a2 Of course, not much has been achieved, but the fact that I could now threaten an exchange of rooks gave me hope.

34...♕f5 35.♖c2 ♖e4

Typical time-trouble activity. I was far more afraid of simple waiting.

36.♖c5 ♖f6

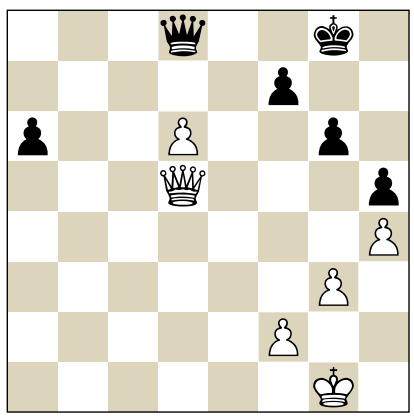
Not wishing simply to wait, Sergey goes in for a dangerous variation.



37.♖xe4 I thought that the queen ending was won for me. More mistrustful (intelligent?) players would have preferred 37.f4 or 37.♖d2.

37...♕xe4+ 38.♔g1 ♕xb4 39.♖c6 Having calculated as far as move 42, I could not believe my luck.

39...♕b2 40.♖xf6 ♕xf6 41.d6 ♕d8 42.♕d5 By quickly making this move and standing up from the board, I wanted to show my teammates and trainers that supposedly everything was worked out.



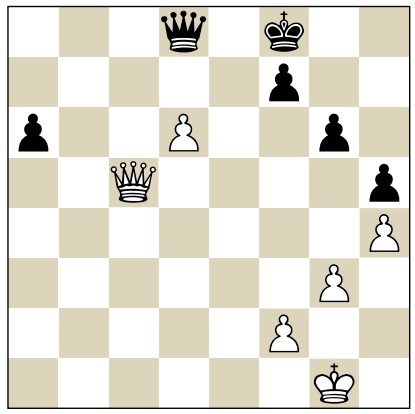
42...♔f8

For some mysterious reason we both thought that 42...♕d7 would lose. I thought that I would simply pick up the a6 pawn and after 43.♕a8+ ♔g7 44.♕xa6 continue on my rightful way. Such a simple resource as 44...♔f6 followed by ...♔e6 and the capture of the d6 pawn was simply overlooked!

Fortunately for me, Sergey also miscalculated something. Possibly he did not believe that after 42...♕d7 43.♕c5 ♕b7 there was no way for White to advance his pawn and simultaneously avoid perpetual check.

43.♕c5

It is curious that both Sergey and I considered the following moves to be the only ones possible.



43...f6

The idea of advancing ...f5-f4 with 43...f5 proves unsuccessful. After 44.♕c7 ♔e8 45.♕c6+ ♕d7 46.♕xa6 f4 47.♕e2+ ♔d8 48.♕e7+ ♕xe7 49.dxe7+ ♔xe7 50.gxf4 the pawn ending is hopeless for Black.

44.♕c7

After a series of forced moves the game goes into an interesting ending.

44...♔e8 45.♕c6+

It was possible to capture the g- and h-pawns by giving up the d-pawn after 45.♕g7 or 45.♕h7, but I thought that the move in the game would give me more winning chances.

45...♔f7 46.♕c4+ ♔e8

In this way Black retains counterplay.

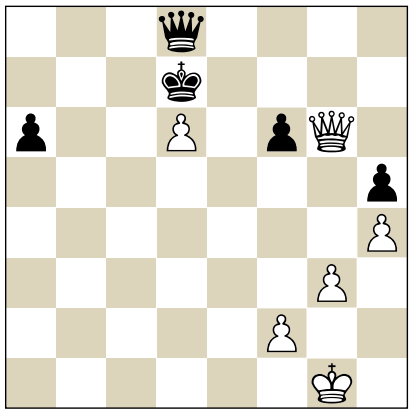
47.♕g8+

After 47.♕xa6 ♔d7 Black's drawing chances would have been improved.

47...♔d7 48.♕xg6

VLADIMIR BARSKY

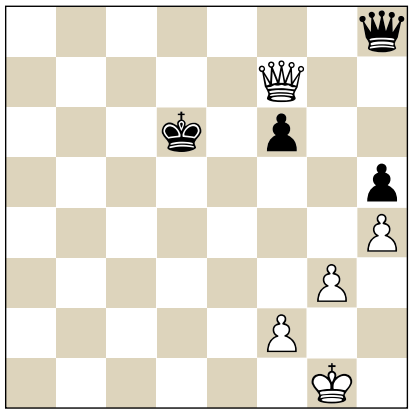
Levon Aronian: 'In his youth Sergey played the Queen's Gambit Accepted, but after growing up he switched to more solid openings.'



48...♕h8 The most resilient. After 48...a5 White has a strong reply in the form of 49.g4. As shown by a detailed analysis, which I will not give here in order to avoid tiring the reader, in this case White's position is more won than in the game.

49.♕d3 a5 50.♕d4 One of the possible ways of transposing into the position after the 54th move.

50...a4 51.♕c5 ♔e6 52.♕c6 a3 53.♕a6 a2 54.♕xa2+ ♔xd6 55.♕f7

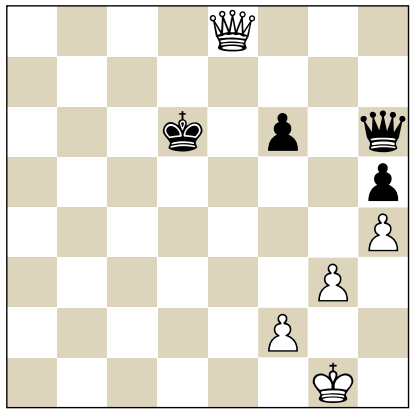


After reaching this position in my calculations I did not look any further, thinking that the rest was elementary. It turned out that I was wrong.

55...♔e5 56.♕d7 ♕h6 57.♕e8+

Very surprised at not finding a quick win after 57.f4+ ♔e4 58.♔f2 ♕g6, I had a slight think and finally 'found' one.

57...♔d6



58.♕d8+

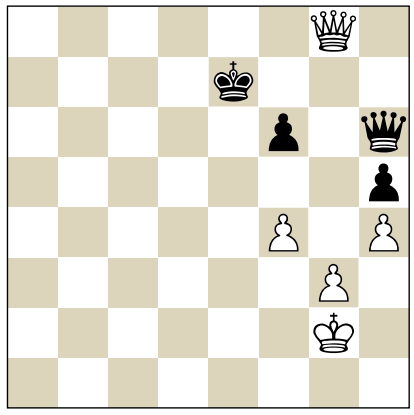
A stupid move. If I had thought for even a minute, I would have realized that Black cannot activate his queen by ...♕h7, since after ♕d8+ ♔e6 ♕b6+ ♔e5 ♕c5+ ♔e6 ♕c6+ ♔e5 f4+ ♔d4 ♕xf6+ he would lose his pawn with check. With the simple 58.♔g2 I would have achieved what I wanted, since after 58...♔d5 59.♕f7+ ♔e5 60.♔f3 Black is again in zugzwang and is forced to allow the white king to advance.

58...♔e6 59.♕g8+ ♔d6 60.♔g2

It was not yet too late to return to the winning position by the cunning 60.♔h2, with the idea after 60...♔e7 of giving Black the move by 61.♔g2 and beginning to advance.

60...♔e7 61.f4

All other moves release the black queen from the corner, but of course they were far better than this blunder.



61...♕f8

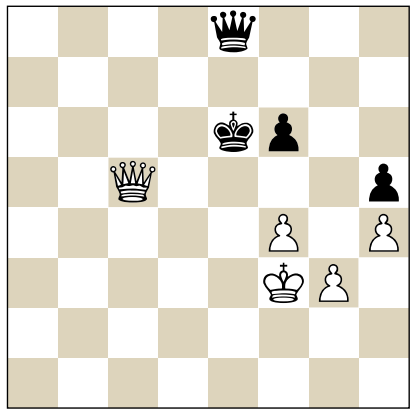
For some inexplicable reason I thought that all the pawn endings were easily won for me. As usual I experienced a sense of déjà vu, suggesting to me that the exchange of queens followed by f5 would lead to a theoretically won ending... After a long think, in a state of shock, especially since at this point we were trailing 2-1 in the match, I decided to play on and hope for a chance opportunity.

62.♕d5 ♕e8

62...♕f7 was simpler, but for the moment the move in the game does not spoil anything.

63.♕c5+ ♔e6 64.♔f3

Having worked out that after 64.♔f2 ♕g6 65.♕c8+ Black has 65...♔d6 66. f5 ♕f7, I decided to be cunning and hope for my usual luck.



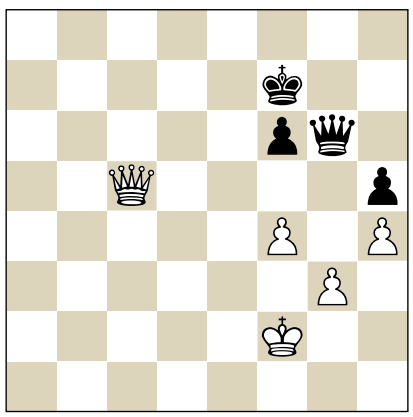
64...♕g6 A painful error in a position where Black was not under any threat. Any move by the queen onto the d- or a-file would have given an easy draw. The most cast-iron draw was demonstrated to me immediately after the game by several members of the Russian team: 64...♕a8+ followed by ...♕d5.

65.♔f2

You can have a similar experience when you lose something valuable and accidentally find it again. A sense of fortune bestowed from above.

65...♔f7

Depressed by his previous move, Sergey does not find a more resilient continuation. Of course, after 65...♔d7 66.f5 ♕h6 67.♕d5+ White's chances of success are considerable, but he still needs to make many accurate moves.



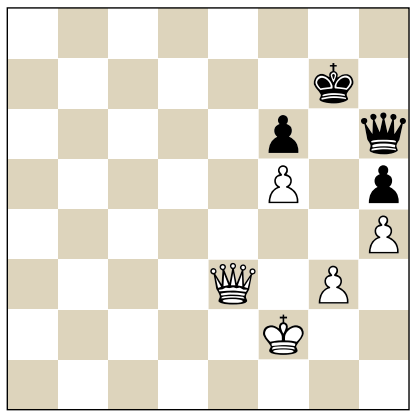
66.f5 Now, however, the black queen is lured into a favourable exchange.

66...♕h6 67.♕c7+

It is also possible to begin with ♔e2. The secret of the position is that there is no way for Black to bring his queen into play.

67...♔g8 68.♕c4+ ♔h8 69.♕e2 ♔g7 After 69...♕f8 Black's position is of course completely lost, but in view of my dreadful play in the final stage, possibly Sergey should have tested me. Now it is all very simple.

70.♕e3 Now, when the black king is unable to maintain the corresponding squares, White can offer the exchange of queens.



70...♕h8 71.♕e7+ ♔h6 72.♔e3 ♕g8 73.♕xf6+ ♔h7 74.♕g6+

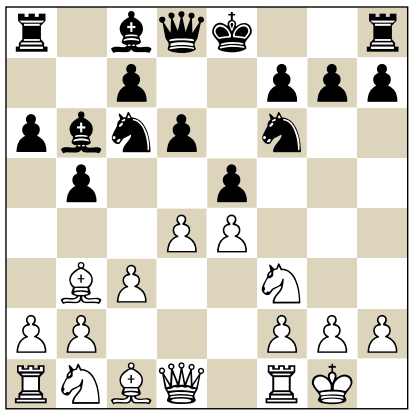
Black resigned. After 74...♕xg6 75.fxg6+ ♔xg6 76.♔e4 the black king is driven back and the h5 pawn is lost.

NOTES BY
Sergei Movsesian

RL 12.6 – C78
Sergei Movsesian
Alexander Onischuk
Ningbo 2011 (2)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗c5 6.c3 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.d4 ♗b6

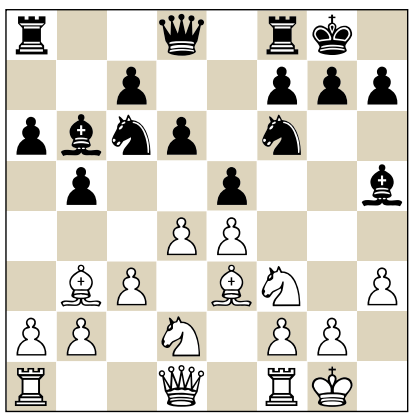
Alex is very experienced in this line, so I knew I had to come up with something unusual to surprise him.



9.♗e3!?

This move had gained some popularity lately, so I decided to give it a try.

9...♗g4 10.♘bd2 0-0 11.h3 ♗h5

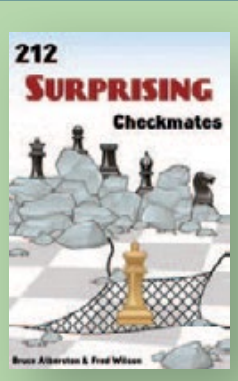


12.dxe5!?

A modest way to squeeze something from the opening. More popular here is 12.♗g5, but Black equalized after 12...exd4! 13.♗d5 dxc3 14.♗xc6 cxd2 15.♗xa8 ♕xa8 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.♕xd2 ♕xe4 18.♖fe1 ♕f5 19.♘h4 ♕g5 20.♕xg5+ fxg5 21.♘f5 ♗g6 in Karjakin-Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 2011.

12...dxe5 13.♕e2 ♕e7

13...♖e8?! 14.♖fd1 ♗xe3 15.♕xe3 gave White an edge in Baramidze-Lenic, Mitropa Cup 2008.



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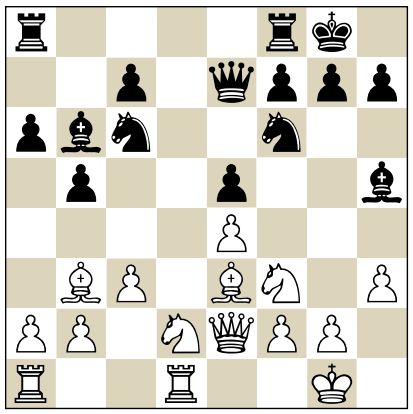
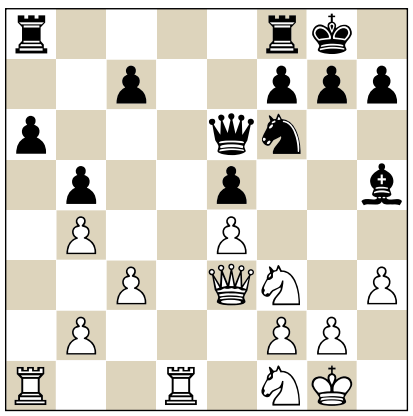
14.♖fd1



The position looks very similar to some lines of the Giuoco Piano. I noticed that after 3.♗c4 my opponent usually develops his bishop to e7, so I hoped that Alex would feel somewhat uncomfortable...

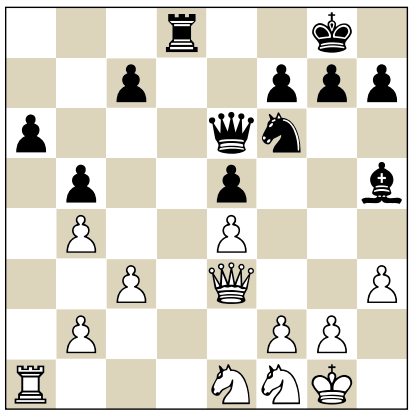
14...♘a5 15.♘f1 ♘xb3 16.axb3 ♕e6 17.b4 ♗xe3 18.♕xe3



18...♖fd8?

A natural-looking move that appears to be a serious positional mistake. Black had to start with 18...♗xf3 19.♕xf3 ♖fd8 20.♘e3, in which case White has a slightly more pleasant position.

19.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 20.♘e1!

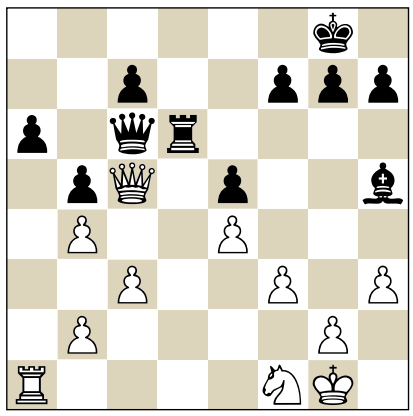


Suddenly the black bishop is out of play, while the white knight is aiming for the key square c5.

20...♕c6

20...♕b3 doesn't work due to 21.♖xa6 ♕xb2 22.♕d3!.

21.f3 ♖d6 22.♘d3 ♘d7 23.♘c5 ♘xc5 24.♕xc5



Now Black is reduced to a passive defence due to the weakness of his queenside.

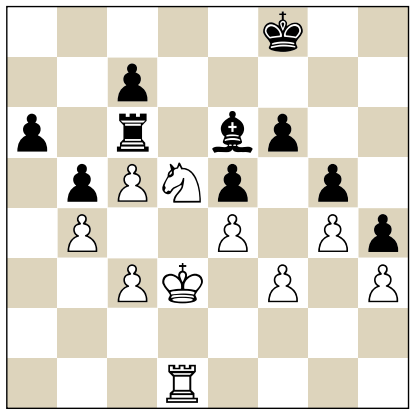
24...f6 25.♘e3 ♗f7 26.♘f5 ♕xc5+ 27.bxc5 ♖e6 28.♘e3 ♔f8 29.b4 ♖c6 30.g4 h5 31.♔f2 h4

Blocking at least one of the flanks where White could try to break Black's defensive walls.

32.♘d5 g5 33.♔e3 ♔e8 34.♖d1

Now the black king can forget about getting to b7...

34...♔f8 35.♔d3 ♗e6



36.c4!

Now the queenside will be opened and the difference between the rooks becomes decisive.

36...bxc4+ 37.♔xc4 ♔f7 38.♖a1 ♗d7 39.b5 axb5+ 40.♔b4 ♗e8 41.♖a7

Black resigned.

NOTES BY
Wang Hao

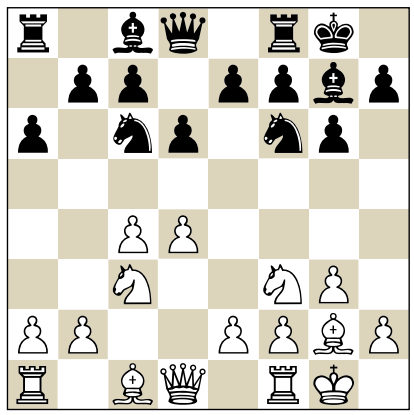
KI 71.1 – E63
Ahmed Adly
Wang Hao
Ningbo 2011 (6)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6

Having gained confidence from my last round game in this year's Russian league (where he beat Dmitry Frolyanov with the black pieces in a King's Indian – ed.), I liked the idea of playing another King's Indian.

3.g3 The favourite variation of my opponent and for me White's favourite choice too ☺.

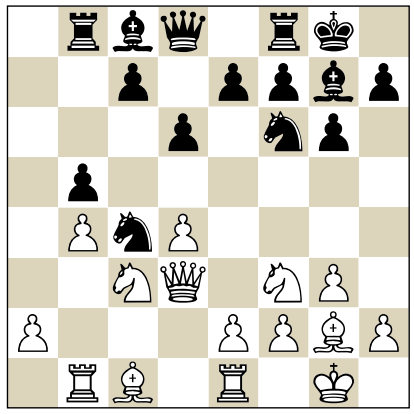
3...♗g7 4.c4 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♘c3 a6



8.♖e1 I won three games as White with 8.b3 against strong GMs. However, my opponent also had excellent results with the text-move and I was pleased to accept the challenge.

8...♖b8 9.♖b1 ♘a5 10.♕d3 The alternatives are 10.♕a4 and 10.b3.

10...b5 11.cxb5 axb5 12.b4 ♘c4

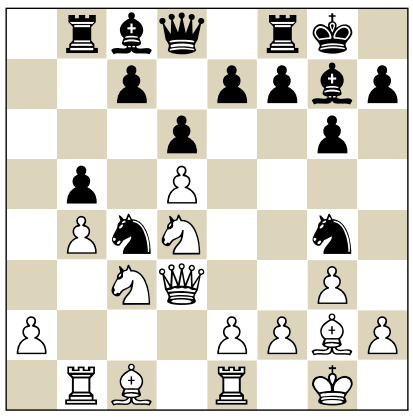


13.d5

The tempting 13.♘xb5? fails to 13...d5, followed by ...♗f5. After the text-move the critical position of the ♖e1 line has arisen. Since I was determined to play for a win, I tried to avoid the exchange of pieces.

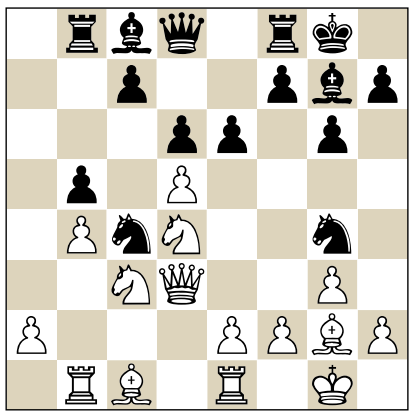
13...♘g4 13...e6 is a slightly weaker choice. After 14.♗g5 h6 15.♗xf6 ♕xf6 16.♖ec1 the position is roughly equal, but there are some slight chances for White to press.

14.♘d4



14...e6! A new and very aggressive move! Black is trying to put pressure on the kingside. White has to make some precise moves.

14...♗d7 and 14...♘ge5 have been played previously, but they were simply unattractive to me.



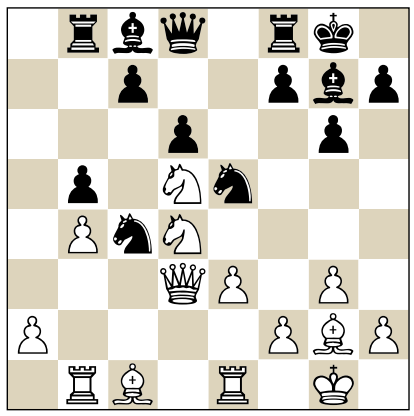
15.e3?!

A dubious move, which weakens White's light squares, although to be honest, this weakening is not that terrible.

The immediate 15.♘c6 would be met by 15...♘ce5 (15...♕f6? 16.♘e4). After 16.♕c2 ♘xc6 17.dxc6 ♘xf2 18.♘xb5 the position looks double-edged. Yet, my Houdini still gives 0.00 ☺.

According to my analysis, 15.♖d1! is the best move. After 15...♗d7 16.a4! (the key move) 16...♘ge5 17.♕c2 bxa4 18.b5 only White can create pressure on the queenside. However, the position is still roughly equal.

15...exd5 16.♘xd5 ♘ge5



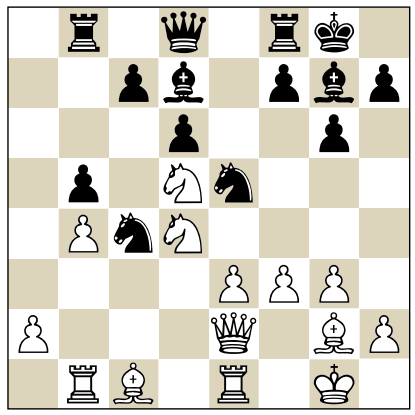
17.♕e2?

During the game, 17.♕c2 was what I was considering. After 17...c6 18.♘c3 ♗d7 (I was thinking about 18...c5, but after 19.♘dxb5 ♗g4 20.a4! the position remains unclear) Black is slightly better thanks to his strong knights in the centre.

Actually, 17.♕f1 is the best move here, correctly avoiding tactical play by Black. Although I still prefer my position, there is a lot of play after 17...c6 18.♘c3 ♗d7 19.a4.

17...♗g4! 18.f3 ♗d7

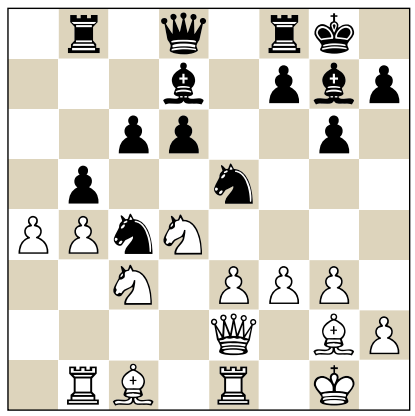
Now White finds himself in trouble because his pieces are not coordinated.



19.a4?

This looks logical, but it doesn't work tactically. White should have withdrawn his knight with 19.♘c3.

19...c6 20.♘c3



20...♖e8?

I thought that with this move I would nicely finish my development, but I had missed a strong tactical trick, which quite unexpectedly would have given me a winning position. White would collapse after 20...bxa4! 21.f4 c5 22.fxe5 cxd4 23.exd4 ♖c8!.

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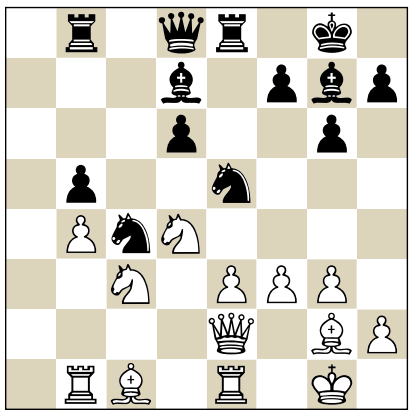
With three wins, five draws and a performance rating of 2854, Wang Hao won the gold medal on Board 1.

21.axb5 cxb5

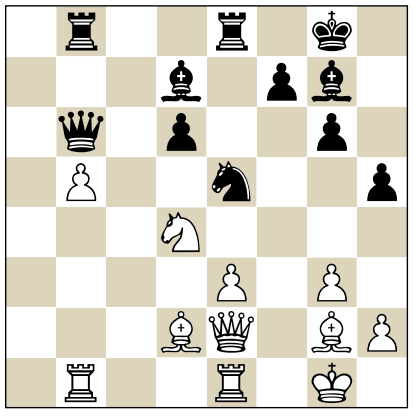


22.♘cxb5?! Too impetuous. White should have been patient here and play 22.♖d1, followed by ♕f2 and ♗f1, to hold the position.

22...♖xb5 23.f4 ♖b8 24.fxe5 ♘xe5 25.b5 h5!?

Trying to weaken White's kingside.

26.♗d2 ♕b6



27.h3?

Here my computer suggests 27.♖b4, but it's too strange and I don't think that anyone would come up with this idea during a game.

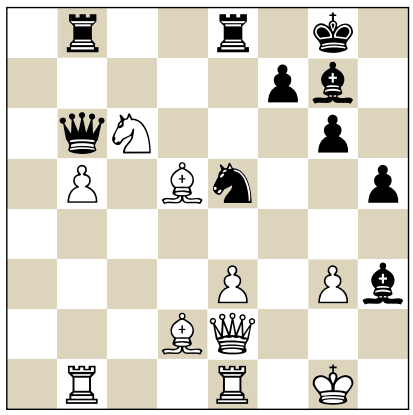
Both 27.♖b3 and 27.♕f1 are logical here, although Black has a better position and can keep pressing.

27...d5! I played this immediately.

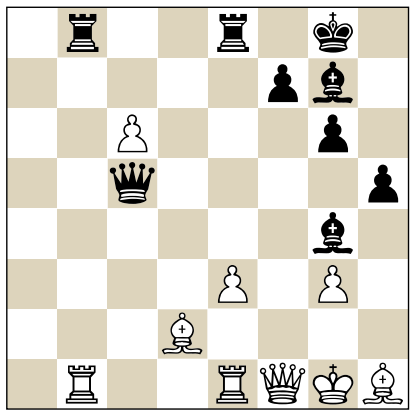
28.♗xd5 Forced. White's defences would be destroyed after ...♘c4.

28...♗xh3 29.♘c6

My opponent was happy here, but I guess he missed my next move.



29...♕c5! 30.♗h1 ♗g4 31.♕f1 ♘xc6 32.bxc6



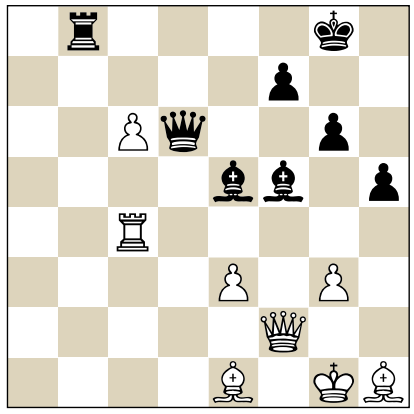
32...♖xb1? I made this mistake under time-pressure. White would have collapsed after 32...♗e5.

33.♖xb1 ♗f5 34.♖c1?!

34.♖b5 was necessary.

34...♕d6 35.♕f2 ♗b2! 36.♖c4 ♗e5 37.♗e1 ♖b8

Here the invasion of my rook is just deadly for White, so he has to sacrifice his passed pawn and ends up in a hopeless endgame.



38.c7 ♖c8 39.♕d2 ♕e7 40.♗d5 ♖xc7 41.♖xc7 ♗xc7

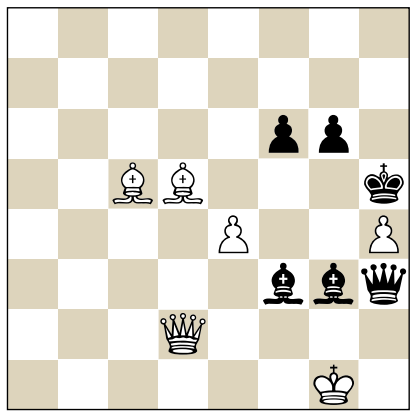
41...♕xc7 was more precise.

42.e4 ♗g4 43.♕f2

I thought that 43.♕e3 was a better try, intending to meet 43...♗e5 with 44.♗c3, but I don't think White can save this endgame anyway.

43...♗e5 44.♗b4 ♕c7 45.♔g2 ♔g7 46.♗d2 ♕e7 47.♗f4 f6! 48.♗c1 ♕c7 49.♗a3? It seems that my opponent was just desperate and made a suicidal move.

49...♕c3 50.♕a7+ ♔h6 51.♗f8+ ♔g5 52.♕f2 h4 53.gxh4+ ♔h5 54.♗c5 ♕h3+ 55.♔g1 ♗f3 56.♕d2 ♗g3



A nice position. White resigned.

Ningbo

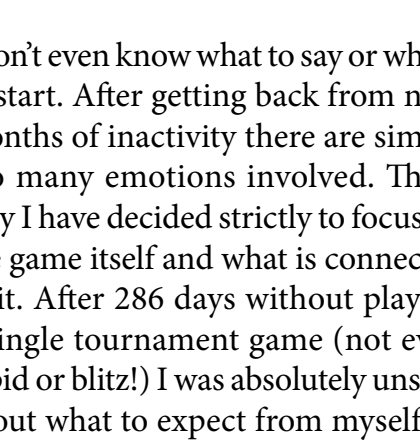
NOTES BY
Peter Leko

RL 17.6 – C89
Vasily Ivanchuk
Peter Leko
Ningbo 2011 (4)

I don't even know what to say or where to start. After getting back from nine months of inactivity there are simply too many emotions involved. That's why I have decided strictly to focus on the game itself and what is connected to it. After 286 days without playing a single tournament game (not even rapid or blitz!) I was absolutely unsure about what to expect from myself on Board 1 facing opponents with an average comparable to a Category XX super tournament. Before the championship, as I was giving an interview to a local journalist who has been following my career right from the start, we jokingly realized that I only had had one such inactive phase before I learned the rules of chess back in 1986!

But the most important thing was that I was happy to be playing again! I can't say that the start was easy, with three draws, the first two with black and the third with white against Radjabov, but by Round 4 I considered myself warmed up.

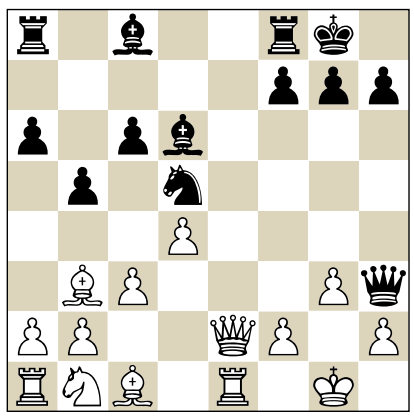
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 0-0 8.c3



A real surprise! In the first two rounds, my opponents Harikrishna and Karjakin both openly tried to exploit my lack of practice by avoiding critical lines. And suddenly Ivanchuk, who has never ever let me play the Marshall against him before, goes for it! I wasn't sure how it would end, but I already felt that it would be a memorable game!

8...d5 9.exd5 ♘xd5 10.♘xe5 ♘xe5 11.♖xe5 c6 12.d4 ♗d6 13.♖e1 ♕h4 14.g3 ♕h3 15.♕e2

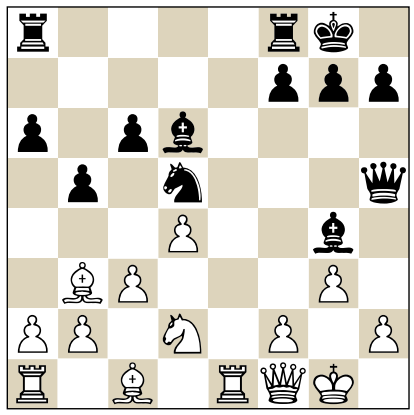
This is the most testing continuation, which I also used with the white pieces in 2009, but to be fair it should be credited to Svidler, who used it for the first time in a top-level game against me back in 2007 at the World Championship in Mexico City. That time it took me around 50 minutes to react to it!



15...♗g4

This is what I played back then as well. Since then there have been times when 15...♗d7 was considered more reliable, and I have played that myself against Dominguez.

16.♕f1 ♕h5 17.♘d2



17...f5!

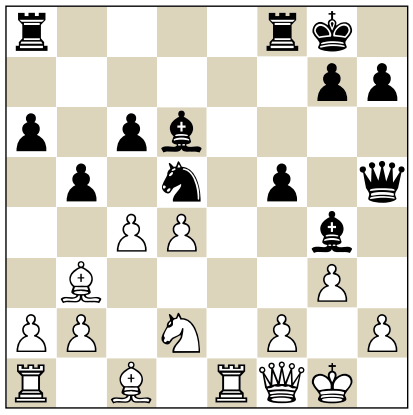
Even if technically speaking this is not a novelty, I still regard it as one! The point is that the 'theory' considered this to be unplayable because everybody missed the brilliant idea behind it, including the vaunted super-engines! Against Svidler I played the natural 17...♖ae8, but I remember spending all my time calculating the fascinating sacrifice 17...♘f4.

After 17...♘f4 18.gxf4 ♗xf4 I spotted the defensive resource 19.h4! with the idea 19...♕xh4 20.♕g2 ♗h3 21.♘f3 ♕h5 22.♗xf4 ♗xg2 23.♔xg2, and White is close to winning with the three pieces against the queen. But actually this line is also not completely forced, and 20...♖ae8, as played by Megaranto against So in 2010, also leads to interesting play, but whether it's objectively correct is another story.

18.c4

The so-called 'refutation'. To be honest I always thought that if I play 17...f5 and it is still like a novelty according to the state of theory, then no way that somebody will go for 18.c4, because White has the solid 18.f3 alternative at his disposal.

Then 18...♗h3 leads to typical Marshall-type long-term compensation, without forced lines, for example 19.♕f2 and despite the fact that the engines keep insisting that White has the advantage, I would be happy on the black side! I have to say this is precisely what makes the Marshall so attractive, even in the 21st century, because the feeling of the position (sometimes connected with sacrifices, sometimes purely strategic!) is more important than the computer's evaluation.



18...f4!

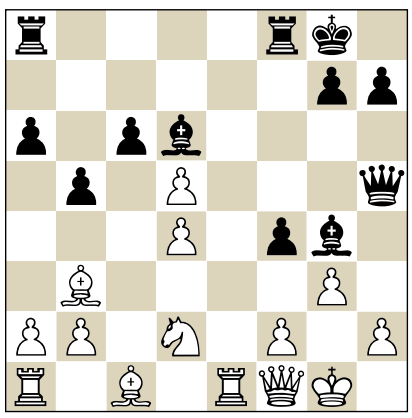
Of course, this is the real direction!

VLADIMIR BARSKY

Following a 'sabbatical' of 286 days ('not even rapid or blitz!') Peter Leko made his comeback with a 2803 performance and an inspired win with black against Ivanchuk.

Not that the other move is really bad. It isn't, but it's simply not in the spirit of the position: 18...bxc4 19.♘xc4 f4! – also here the key move! Let me just show a nice line here as well: 20.♘e5! (this guarantees a safe position for White – after 20.♘xd6 fxg3 White is forced to give up the queen: 21.fxg3 – 21.hxg3? ♗f3 wins – 21...♖xf1+ 22.♖xf1 ♗e6, and Black is clearly better) 20...fxg3 21.hxg3 ♖ae8! 22.♘xg4 ♕xg4 23.♖xe8 ♖xe8 24.♗d2 ♗xg3 25.fxg3 ♕xg3+ 26.♕g2 ♕xg2+ 27.♔xg2 ♖e2+ 28.♔f3 ♖xd2 29.♖c1 ♖d3+ 30.♔e2 ♖xd4 31.♖xc6 ♔f8 32.♖xa6, and the game will most likely end in a draw, but White is pressing.

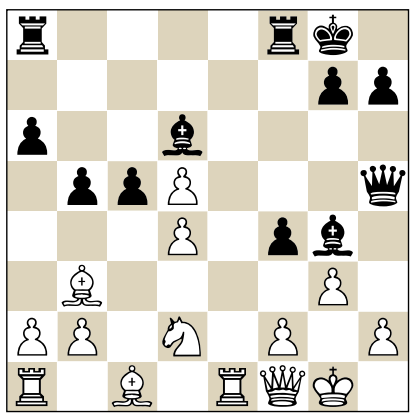
19.cxd5



19...c5!!

This is the hidden point behind my novelty! The idea is the following: first I sacrifice a piece for nothing and then demonstrate the strength of the sacrifice with a quiet pawn move! White is practically in zugzwang!

Something really funny happened at this point! When I flashed out 19...c5, Vasily reacted with a sincere smile and admiration by gesturing with his hands and telling something to his captain (by this time almost everybody had gathered around the board!) in Ukrainian. As it turned out he asked for a cup of coffee! From this point he went on to think for about 50 minutes and Chuky would not be Chuky if he had not found the strongest move!



20.♖e4!!

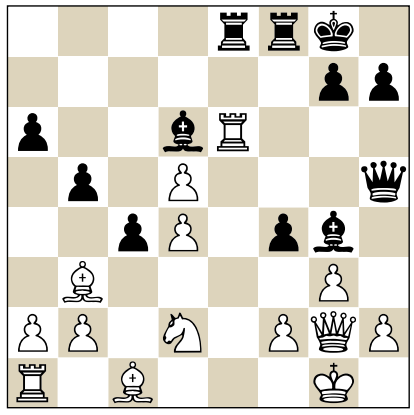
He had exactly 23 minutes left after having made this move. I stood at 1 hour 23 minutes, and now it was my turn to show my home preparation. Here I present you, dear reader, with my old analysis, as I found it on my new laptop after the game...

20.♖e5 ♗xe5 21.dxe5 c4 22.♗c2 ♕xe5, and Black can only be better.

20.♘e4? fxg3 21.hxg3 (21.♘xg3 ♗xg3) 21...♗f3 wins.

20.dxc5? fxg3 21.hxg3 ♗xc5, and now the bishop on the a7-f2 diagonal decides the issue.

As far as I can recall, 20.♕g2 must have been my main move and that's why nothing really seemed 'familiar to me' during the game(!): 20...♖ae8 (during the game I also considered 20...f3!?) 21.♖e6 (21.♖e4 ♗h3! 22.♕h1 ♕g4!! – who can find this? – 23.♕f3 fxg3 24.♕xg4 gxf2+ wins) 21...c4, and now:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 22.♗c2 f3! 23.♕f1 ♗xg3 (now my computer points out that 23...♗h3! is much stronger: 24.♕d1 ♗xg3) 24.hxg3 ♗h3 25.♗e4 ♗xf1 26.♘xf1 ♖f6! 27.♗d2 ♖exe6 28.dxe6 ♖xe6 29.♖e1 ♕h3 30.♗xf3 ♖xe1 31.♗xe1 ♕f5 32.♔g2 ♕b1 33.♗c3 b4 34.♗xb4 ♕xb2 35.♗d5+ ♔h8 36.♗c5 c3 37.♘e3 c2 38.♘xc2 ♕xc2, and Black is better, but I am not sure if it's winning.

B) 22.♘xc4 bxc4 23.♗xf4 (23.♗xc4 ♗h3) 23...cxb3 24.♖xd6 bxa2 25.♗e5 ♖f3!, with a strong initiative. Bad is 20.♗d1? fxg3 21.hxg3 ♗xg3! 22.fxg3 ♖xf1+ 23.♘xf1 ♗xd1, winning. Also bad is 20.♖e6? fxg3 21.hxg3 ♗xg3 22.fxg3 ♖xf1+ 23.♘xf1 ♗xe6

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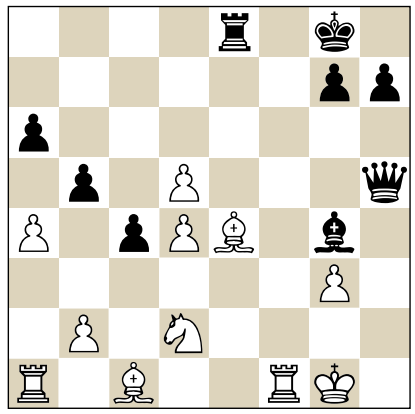
24.dxe6 c4 25.♗c2 ♕e2 26.♗d2 ♖f8 27.♖e1 ♕f2+ 28.♔h1 ♕xe1! 29.♗xe1 ♖xf1+ 30.♔g2 ♖xe1, winning.

20.♗c2 fxg3 21.hxg3 ♗xg3 22.fxg3 ♖xf1+ 23.♖xf1 (23.♘xf1 ♗f3!) 23...♖e8 24.♗e4 ♕h3, with pressure.

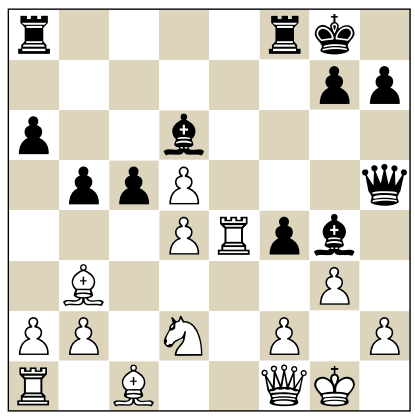
20.a4 c4 21.♗c2 fxg3 22.hxg3 ♗xg3 23.fxg3 ♖xf1+ 24.♘xf1 (24.♖xf1 ♖e8 25.♗e4



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

25...c3!! – how can a human think up something like this? The resource 25...♕h3 26.♖a3! had to be stopped by playing this move – 26.bxc3 ♕h3! 27.♗g2 ♕xg3 28.♘e4 ♖xe4 wins) 24...♗f3 25.♔f2 ♖f8, and Black should be winning.

By the way, seeing all these lines I am absolutely not ashamed that I did not remember any of it! First of all because during the game I also considered 20.♖e4 the most logical move and was wondering what to do here.



20...c4

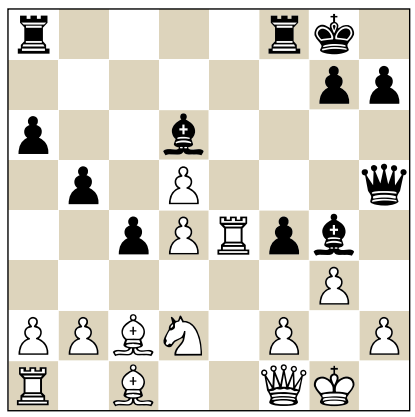
I also spent exactly 50 minutes and got close to him, with 33 minutes. What happened? Well, the answer is pretty simple: I could not recall any of my analysis. The truth is often quite amazing! The reason I could not recall my analysis was simply because it had been so long ago! I had found the idea with 18...f4 and 19...c5 on my laptop quite a while ago during a nightly preparation before some game. I remember that I was very proud of it, and after some time I managed to prove to my computer that the idea is sound, even if it cost me quite some sleep!

Since my laptop was claiming a win for White with almost every move and never got deeper than 11 or 12 ply, I had to suggest moves for White myself. By the end of the day I was convinced that the idea worked, but had not clarified at all which was White's best move.

This meant that there was nothing left but to first empty my head and start thinking from scratch! I know that so far in my comments I have not been completely fair to the engines, because a Marshall player really needs them, indeed, needs them badly once his intuition tells him that he has found a goldmine! After that, the rest is often taken care of by the silicon monster with incredible precision.

Now, however, I was left on my own and had to figure it out all by myself.

21.♗c2



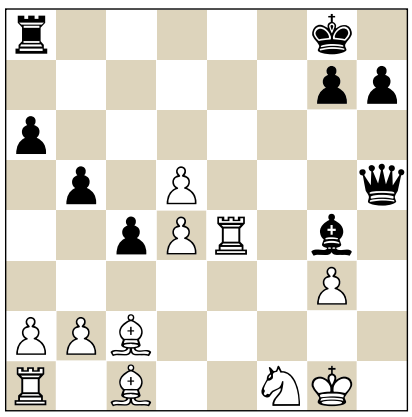
21...fxg3

At first I wasn't sure about entering this forced line, but when I spotted the nice finesse on the 24th move it all made sense. Besides, the alternatives looked highly speculative, and we were in a team competition, after all!

22.hxg3 ♗xg3 23.fxg3 ♖xf1+ 24.♘xf1

VLADIMIR BARSKY

‘At the same time, people tend to say that modern classical chess is dead! In what crazy world are we living?’



24...♕h3!

Finding this quiet move took me quite some time. After all, White has a rook and two pieces for the queen, and now it’s White to move, even! If White manages to stabilize in some way, Black can easily end up totally lost. But after some accurate calculation everything seemed to be fine for Black.

A good example of how the natural approach of let’s-deploy-the-inactive-piece ends can be seen from 24...♖f8? 25.♘e3! (White parries all the threats) 25...♗f3 26.♖h4, and Black can resign. The same goes for 24...♗f3 25.♖h4, and it’s over.

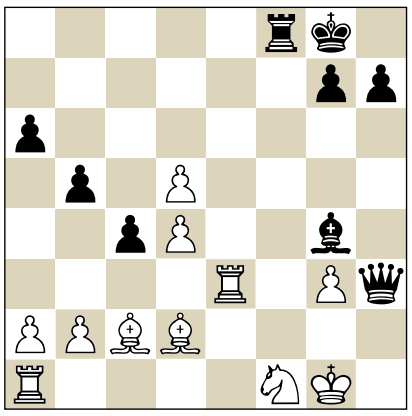
25.♖e3!

Very precise play and the only move that caused me a headache. At the same time, it’s also the only move to keep the balance! Now my opponent was down to 8 minutes.

The other move was 25.♖f4, but we both realized that after 25...♖e8 26.♗e3 ♖xe3! 27.♘xe3 ♕xg3+ 28.♘g2 ♗f3 29.♖xf3 ♕xf3 this construction with queen versus rook, knight and bishop is in Black’s favour. White is missing his dark-squared bishop.

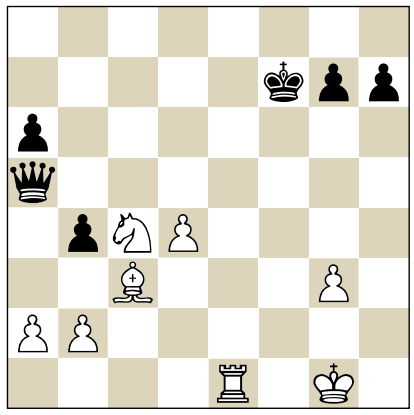
25...♖f8 26.♗d2

This was a tough psychological moment. I did not want to let him sacrifice his rook for my bishop, but I couldn’t find anything better.



26...♗f3

Now I was also down to 11 minutes. My heart was calling for 26...♗f5, but I wasn’t sure if it was correct or whether I just wished that it was so. The line that I calculated proved to me that it was more wishful thinking than objectivity: 27.♗xf5 ♕xf5 28.♖ae1 ♕f2+ 29.♔h1 ♖f5 30.♖e8+! (a great finesse – after 30.♖e5 ♕f3+ 31.♔h2 ♖h5+ 32.♖xh5 ♕xh5+ 33.♔g1 ♕xd5 34.♗c3 b4 the following works for White: 35.♘e3 ♕a5 36.♘xc4 ♕c7) 30...♔f7 31.♖8e5 ♕f3+ 32.♔h2 ♖h5+ 33.♖xh5 ♕xh5+ 34.♔g1 ♕xd5 35.♗c3, and now after 35...b4 White has the strong intermezzo 36.♘e3! ♕a5 (36...♕d6 37.♘f5!) 37.♘xc4!



and I stopped here, but the cool engine spots the inhuman resource (and even the monster does so only at greater depths!) 37...♕d8!! and claims that it is a draw.

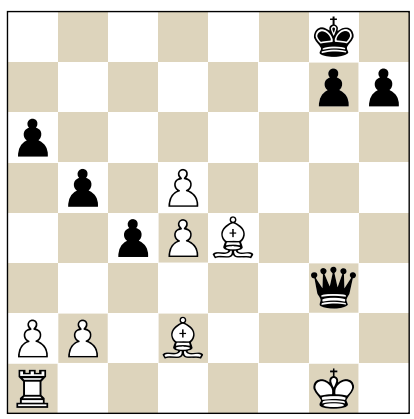
27.♖xf3 ♖xf3 28.♗e4

It’s incredible that here the main move of the engine is 28...♖f6, claiming the usual 0.00, but to me it looks equal to capitulation.

28...♖xg3+

A very natural reaction, as I did not think that Black had an alternative. Besides, it looked like a logical outcome of a very interesting game to end with perpetual check. We are living in the 21st century after all.

29.♘xg3 ♕xg3+



30.♗g2?!

This is objectively speaking a mistake, but during the game I also considered it a possibility, even if a risky one! Time-trouble was approaching. Ten minutes for 10 moves in this position for both sides was practically nothing, and it looked like it could go

either way. I guess Vasily would not have hesitated to agree to a perpetual check, had I not forgotten my analysis and would quietly walk around with 1.35 on my clock! It is amazing how many small nuances can influence the outcome of a practical game even at the highest level. At the same time, people tend to say that modern classical chess is dead! In what crazy world are we living?

Actually, when I checked my notes after the game they ended with 30.♔f1 ♕h3+ 31.♔f2 ♕h4+ 32.♔e3 ♕h6+ 33.♔e2 ♕h2+, and it's a draw.

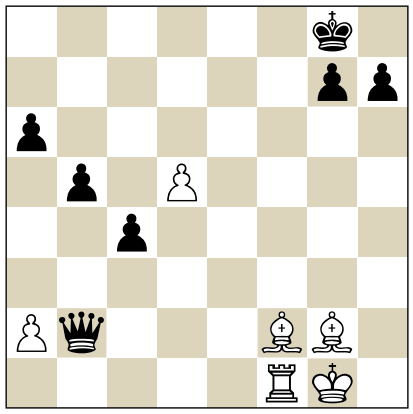
30...♕d3

According to the computers, this is already winning for Black, but this is very far from the truth!

31.♗e1

A high-class move. White is ready to part with his pawns in order to reorganize his pieces! My opponent looked very confident at this point.

31...♕xd4+ 32.♗f2 ♕xb2 33.♖f1



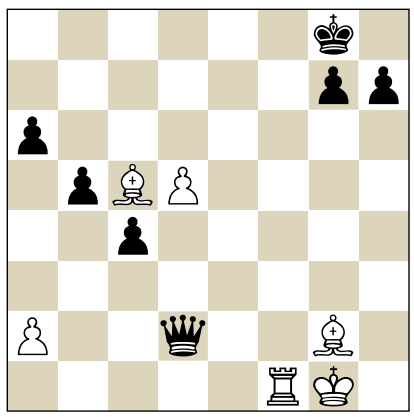
After my opponent had blitzed out his last seven moves, his time had already jumped to 11 minutes.

33...♕d2

I was keeping his speed and claiming 14 minutes at this point! I also remained confident, so we were getting ready for a street fight!

34.♗c5

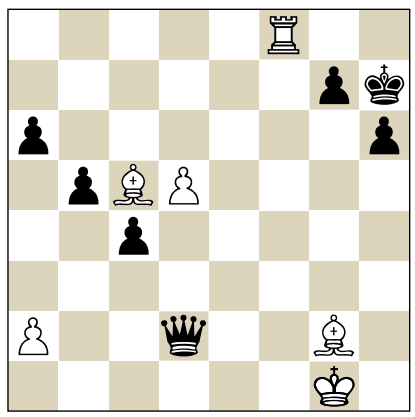
This was also played instantly and was the logical follow-up of White's concept.



34...g6?

This is a serious mistake. Since we had blitzed out the last eight moves, I fell into the trap of making my decision too quickly. This was the point at which I had to invest most of my time to find out what was going on. Well, without an engine the position is so complicated that I could not have figured out what was happening anyway, but at least I should have tried!

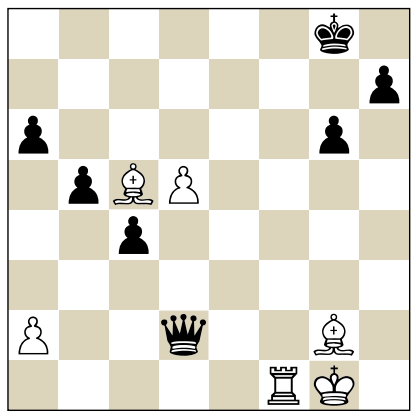
The problem was that I was afraid I wouldn't be able to answer the question whether I should move the h-pawn or the g-pawn even if I invested most of my remaining time, but that those minutes could come in handy for the last few moves of the time-trouble. I disliked moving the h-pawn on general grounds, because I was not happy that the g2 bishop would get active with tempo after ♗e4, check, and somehow I hallucinated that White would always have perpetual check. But objectively speaking, White should be facing real problems after perfect play: 34...h6! 35.♖f8+ ♔h7, and as it turns out, those ♗e4 checks are nothing to be afraid of:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 36.♗e4+ g6 37.♖f7+ ♔g8, and there is no perpetual: 38.♖e7 (38.♖f8+ ♔g7) 38...c3 39.♖e8+ ♔f7 40.♖e7+ ♔f6 41.♖e6+ ♔g5 42.♖xg6+ ♔f4 43.♖e6 c2 44.♗d6+ ♔g4 45.♖g6+ ♔h5, and wins;

B) 36.♖f7 ♕e1+ 37.♖f1 ♕e5, and the win is still far away, but it's obvious that Black is on the right track!



35.♖f8+!

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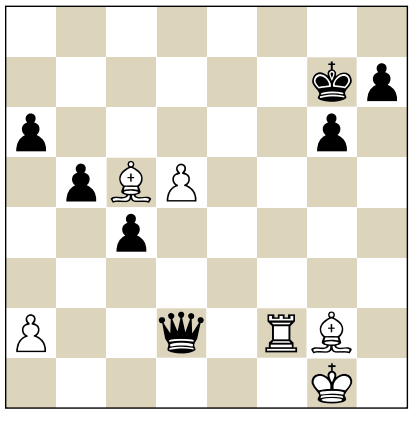
My opponent was clever enough to take his time to understand the finesses, and while he was thinking, I also realized the drawback of my last move! I was wondering whether I would get a second chance to correct my mistake?

35...♔g7 36.♖f2

The computer claims that 36.♖e8 was more accurate for securing a draw, but I think that the game continuation is good enough.

Ningbo 2011													
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Mp	Bp
1	Armenia	*	2½	2	2	2½	2	2	2½	3½	3½	14	22½
2	China	1½	*	2½	2½	2½	3½	2	3	1½	3½	13	22½
3	Ukraine	2	1½	*	2	1½	2½	2½	2½	2½	2½	12	19½
4	Russia	2	1½	2	*	3	3	1	1½	4	3	10	21
5	Hungary	1½	1½	2½	1	*	2	2½	2	3½	3	10	19½
6	USA	2	½	1½	1	2	*	2½	3	2½	3½	10	18½
7	Azerbaijan	2	2	1½	3	1½	1½	*	3	2	2½	9	19
8	India	1½	1	1½	2½	2	1	1	*	2½	2½	7	15½
9	Israel	½	2½	1½	0	½	1½	2	1½	*	3	5	13
10	Egypt	½	½	1½	1	1	½	1½	1½	1	*	0	9



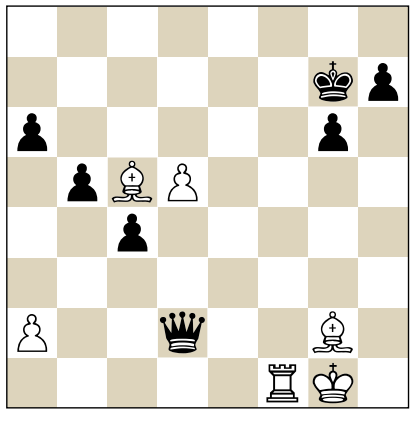
36...♕d1+

I wasn't happy about this choice because in the meantime I had understood that 34...h6 would have been the right choice, but I did not see any winning chances here.

For some strange reason the engine is claiming that 36...♕e1+ is correct, with the idea of playing 37.♖f1 ♕e5, but this looks totally insane with the pawn on g6 and the king on g7: after 38.♗f8+ it's clear that White is never in any danger: 38...♔h8!? (What to say? It's not my suggestion!) 39.d6, and Black has to give a perpetual if he can. Okay, to be fair, the computer can... (And even the so-called 'losing move' 39.♗h6 should be just fine: 39...♕d4+! 40.♖f2 – 40.♔h1? ♕h4+ – 40...c3 41.d6 c2 42.♗f1 g5 43.♗xg5 ♕g4+ 44.♖g2 ♕xg5 45.♖xg5 c1♕ 46.♖d5, and Black will have to give a perpetual.)

37.♖f1 ♕d2

And now something incredible happened. My opponent used his six minutes, and when he got to less than a minute decided to step out of the repetition!



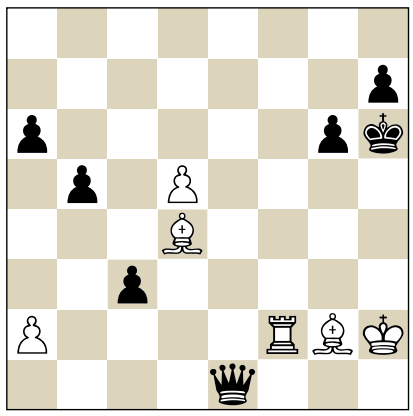
38.♔h2?

By now I had expected the repetition with 38.♖f2 and I was only secretly hoping for the desired second chance!

38...c3 39.♖f2 ♕e1 40.♗d4+

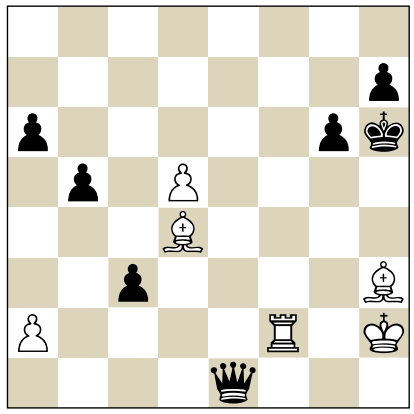
40.♗f8+ ♔g8 41.♖f1 ♕h4+ 42.♔g1 c2, and all the important diagonals are under control.

40...♔h6



This was the square I wanted to put my king on when I played ...g6. Dreams do sometimes come true, and this was just that day! After the time-control my opponent started to think very deeply and probably realized that he was just lost. Out of desperation, his blunder came after 20 minutes of thinking...

41.♗h3? This loses on the spot. The only move was to go to the same square, but with the king(!): 41.♔h3!. Now, since d6 is no longer a threat, I can continue with the cool 41...b4!, and after 42.♗f3! I had planned 42...a5 (42...♕b1 is the engine's move, but I am not impressed) 43.♔g2!, and now White's king is safe from any checks! Which makes the realization phase quite difficult, in my opinion.



41...c2!

Actually, I had been so busy calculating the lines after 41.♔h3 that it took me quite some time to get back to reality. But before anyone of my team got seriously worried, I managed to get back to earth and spotted the nice finish!

White resigned because of 42.♖xc2 ♕e4, and White loses the bishop or the rook: 43.♖d2 ♕f4+.

It was a fantastic feeling to have beaten the Ukrainian team thanks to my win over Ivanchuk! After all, I had not forgotten that due to my losses to him we had lost the last two matches in both the Dresden 2008 and the Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 Olympiads. ■

Short Stories

Land of Hope and Former Glory

I have long known that the English Grandmaster Stuart Conquest is a man of many and varied talents, but had not previously imagined that grave-digging was among them. It therefore came as a great surprise when, at a meeting of the Staunton Society at the Oxford and Cambridge Club in Pall Mall, over a sumptuous lobster bisque and guinea-fowl dinner, the immaculately-attired Tournament Director of the Gibraltar Open announced to the assembled company that he had recently dug-up Johannes Zukertort from his hidden resting place in Brompton cemetery.

I had sudden visions of the nefarious trade in cadavers and subsequent Burke and Hare murders which led to Parliament passing the Anatomy Act of 1832: this provided the medical establishment with a bountiful, legal supply of corpses, thereby putting a few decidedly dubious characters out of business. However it quickly transpired that Stuart had not, in fact, disinterred the body of the victor of London 1883, but had merely lovingly unearthed the sunken gravestone with a trowel. It was quite a touching story actually and one which I hope Stuart will shortly commit to print.

Boris Spassky was by no means the first person to muse upon Zukertort's health, but I think he must have been right when he opined, during a Bundesliga weekend back in the 1980s, when a few members of the Solingen team were examining the games of the 1886 match, that Zukertort must have been seriously ill when he faced Steinitz: the poor chap only lasted another two years. By the way, Zukertort and I both lost a World Championship Match by the score of 12½-7½. As he dropped dead at the age of 46, and I have already reached that milestone, I am hoping that this will be the only coincidence we share...

In today's Britain, with its anaemic economy and its rioting citizenry, it is hard to imagine that there was once a time when the country was a magnet for the best and brightest from abroad. The court composer, André Danican Philidor, found a welcome refuge from regicidal, revolutionary French mobs. Later, during the height of Empire and opportunity, Zukertort, Steinitz, Gunsberg and others would settle on Albion's fair shores. Capablanca may not have lived in Britain, but he loved the people, the place, and toured extensively.

We were, perhaps, less supportive of home-grown talent. The amateur ethos – a shameless fraud perpetrated by the leisured classes to ensure their own supremacy – takes much of the blame. It was somehow considered ungentlemanly to pay Englishmen to be good at sport (foreigners, being foreign, of course, were not quite gentlemen anyway...). This viciously reactionary doctrine stifled the development of cricket in England for decades and rugby union for longer still. It is, in my view, the reason why in the twentieth century, prior to the Fischer-boom, we produced no chess player of true international stature. Granted, we had a number of worthy and respected competitors – such as Yates, Alexander and Penrose – who were all capable, on their day, of defeating World Champions. None of them, however, could be described as superstars. Of these, only Yates was a professional, living primarily off his journalism. He succumbed prematurely, by asphyxiation, aged just 48, from a faulty gas fitting. Perhaps even there poverty played its part...

Thankfully, by the time I truly began on the chess scene – in the late 1970s – things were already changing for the better. The seeds had already been planted by the 1960s Cambridge 'mafia' of Hartston, Keene and Co., who were not only stronger than the previous generation, but also wrote about the game extensively. Later quality would suffer at the expense of quantity, but it was not always thus...

However, it was Tony Miles who became England's first grandmaster in 1975, who made the real difference in raising standards. He was a proper professional player and hard as nails. He didn't always make easy company: as Jonathan (later 'Professor') Mestel said to me, at my first Olympiad in Thessaloniki 1984, 'We have two teams – Tony and the rest.' In general, there was a free and mutually beneficial exchange of ideas but never with Tony. England

captain David Anderton smilingly recalls Tony hiding his analysis from his team-mates...

Britain's first female Prime Minister inadvertently did her bit for chess. It is doubtful whether the Oxford mathematician Dr. John Nunn – a fine tactician and another hugely influential figure – would have ventured the life of a professional, had not the Thatcher education reforms undermined academic tenure. Industrial reforms initially sent unemployment skyrocketing to over 3 million (it would later drop dramatically). Given a choice between chess and the dole, it was not surprising that people plumped for the former.

A confluence of further factors made the 1970s and '80s a particularly propitious time for chess in Britain. The burgeoning, post-Fischer, chess publishing business provided royalties for writers and aficionados with ample literature for study. A thriving, competitive weekend circuit honed skills and brought prizes. A steady England sponsor – merchant bank Duncan Lawrie – added a welcome degree of job security and ensured, more often than not, that we got our best team out. This fertile soil enabled us to take the silver medal in three consecutive Olympiads – 1984, 1986 and 1988.

A bronze in Novi Sad 1990 did not, by itself, imply a significant slide in fortunes, but by now the dark clouds on the horizon were blindingly obvious to the more analytically-minded. John Nunn's prophetic article in *British Chess Magazine*, twenty years ago, on the decline of British chess, provoked a furious response from various quarters. As John admitted many years later, after his predictions had proved depressingly accurate, he had not seen anything the least bit controversial in his remarks. For him it was simply self-evident that, unless things changed, it was only a matter of time before we would be overtaken by countries such as France, which organised considerably more tournaments. Notwithstanding the fact that in Khanty-Mansiysk, France only held England on account of Sebastien Feller's combinative brilliance (a result which we are still waiting FIDE to overturn), this has clearly happened: France ranks third in FIDE's list of top countries; England a modest fifteenth.

'Given a choice between chess and the dole, it was not surprising that people plumped for the former.'

The mini-boom after my 1993 match with Garry Kasparov proved short-lived. Even the ever-industrious organiser Raymond Keene gradually turned his attention from chess to other things. True, there were triumphs, like our gold medal in the 1997 European Team Championship, but one by one our most talented players fell by the wayside, unable to make a decent living. A particularly grievous loss was Matthew Sadler, who preferred the safer pastures of a job at Hewlett Packard than the insecurities of a world top-30 player. Julian Hodgson – a talented, but pathologically bone-idle individual – was perhaps not quite in the same class. Nevertheless he was rated over 2600 at a time when this still (just about) meant something. Eventually he chose a kind of intellectual hara-kiri – the job of teaching school kids, full-time, such banalities as the difference between a knight and bishop...

They say that an optimist is a misinformed pessimist, but nevertheless I get the strong feeling that things are now looking up in Britain. At the extremity of the Empire – by which I mean Gibraltar – we have, arguably, the finest open tournament in the world. In just two years, the London Chess Classic has set standards of presentation that some more well-established events would do well to emulate. The man behind the LCC – Malcolm Pein – is a dynamo who combines tournament-organising with journalism, running a business (the London Chess Centre) and a rapidly expanding charity (Chess in Schools and Communities). The latter, if it succeeds in its goal of getting chess on the curriculum, has the potential to transform the junior game completely.

The new ECF President, CJ de Mooi, has energised the federation in a way that his serial-junketing predecessor never could. CJ was responsible for ensuring the strongest ever Darwin Strategic British Championship this year. An awful lot remains to be done – particularly on putting the federation on a sounder financial footing – but there is an urgency and willingness to move forward that was entirely absent previously.

On the playing front, a couple of 40 somethings – Adams and myself – still lead the way, but isn't that just the same as in the World Championship? ☺ Luke McShane has regrettably taken up paid employment again but the new Commonwealth Champion, Gawain Jones, has made very considerable strides since returning from New Zealand. We are a little light on promising juniors at present. However you should watch out for 16-year-old Yang-Fan Zhou who should have beaten Adams with black in the last round of the British.

While it would be an exaggeration to predict that my country is at the dawn of a golden chess era, don't be at all surprised if you see us doing a bit better in the near future. ■

The Champion on the Sofa

The Super Final of the Russian Championship, the strongest in our very short history, finished with a victory for Peter Svidler. The Petersburg grandmaster is now a six-time (!) Russian champion, and has participated in the national championships 14 times. This is close to the record set by Botvinnik, who was champion of the USSR seven times. **Mark Glukhovsky**, editor-in-chief of *64*, on a unique talent that reminds him of one of the most charming heroes of classic Russian literature.

'I'm not surprised at all when Peter wins. In my view he's one of the strongest players in the world and, on the contrary, I'm surprised when he doesn't perform very successfully.' Thus, briefly and meaningfully, Alexander Grischuk commented on his friend Peter Svidler's win at the recently-concluded Super Final of the national championship. There's nothing for me to add to that, really. Grischuk, as usual, looks at the very essence of things and events, and so subsequent remarks can only be seen as an attempt to interpret the grandmaster's thoughts. Especially since Grischuk refused to answer the question of what Peter needs in order to demonstrate these kinds of results more often. 'I told him my opinion on that question, but I wouldn't want to repeat it publicly', he explained.

The result that Svidler produced at the latest Super Final could have sent even the most hardened sceptic into raptures. In a category-19 tournament, where only two grandmasters, Artyom Timofeev and Alexander Galkin, had a rating below 2700, over a short seven-day distance Svidler secured himself an early victory by scoring five points in the first six rounds! Besides the outsiders in the tournament, Vladimir Kramnik (right after his triumph in Dortmund) and Ian Nepomniachtchi – the reigning Russian champion – were also beaten. A defeat in the last round by Morozevich could no longer change anything in the grandmaster's fate for this tournament.

Svidler himself agrees that this result is comparable to his best previous achievements – his wins in Tilburg (1997), Dortmund (1998), or, let's say, sharing second place at the World Championship in San Luis. Peter is very (in my view, excessively)

BORIS DOLMATOVSKY

The game that decided the 2011 Super Final. In Round 6 Peter Svidler shook off last year's champion Ian Nepomniachtchi to reach a score that could no longer be matched by his rivals.

self-critical, but after his Moscow triumph he did manage to find a few good words for himself after all – he didn't play badly, he 'saw the board', he calculated the variations well. It's good to calculate variations like Svidler – that means starting your calculation where many others are finishing it.

I recall a trip to Ningbo three years ago, to a friendly Russia-China match, where, enraged by his failures in classical chess, Peter literally destroyed his opponents in speed play. He scored 8½ points out of 10, I think, and in his analysis after the games he came up with such variations that his opponents, decent Chinese grandmasters with ratings around 2700, could only throw up their hands in amazement. Grischuk also thinks that Svidler's main strength is open calculating play, he has few equals here.

'In my mind I understand that there aren't that many players in the world that I should fear when I'm in good form', Svidler says. 'But how to achieve that form – that is the question!' Of course, all professional chess players ask themselves this question constantly. But asking the question and actively seeking an answer to it aren't the same thing. The simplest explanation usually turns out to be the most correct one, and the reasons for Svidler's periodic failures most likely lie in the fact that he just doesn't work hard enough on his chess. Peter himself would probably agree with that simple explanation – he likes to talk about the last five episodes of some wonderful American TV series that he absolutely has to rush to watch right this minute. There are innumerable ways to kill time – and our hero is very familiar with many of them.

At one point he was keen on playing pool – and spent several hours a day at the pool table. He reads a great deal, listens to music (Peter is a big expert on rock), and watches films and TV shows. He is crazy about cricket and until recently would spend days and weeks watching this extremely exotic sport. He is happy in his family life and likes to spend time with his kids – nine-year-old twins Dani and Nikita. The twins play music, and not unsuccessfully. I asked Peter about the latest achievements of his son, who won a prize in a children's music contest recently. 'That's my son', he replies, with emphasis on the word 'my'. 'He has ability, but you can imagine how much you have to work on an instrument! And he likes his bike so much more...'

A talent that won't limit itself in any way. A talent that won't subordinate itself to the life of the people around him. A talent that lives only in positive emotions, without suffocating itself, without exerting force on itself or those around it. It reminds me of a sad joke by Bareev, who to a question from a journalist – did your win come with difficulty? – replied roughly like this: of course it was difficult, Svidler is the only one who wins easily! In that reply we can sense envy of his talent, but the joke is only partly a joke. Svidler's games will never stink later, to recall Tal's beautiful metaphor. This is pure, distilled chess talent, and if we needed a measure of chess talent we could certainly call it 'one Svidler'.

PHOTO BORIS DOLMATOVSKY

We shouldn't think, of course, that Svidler doesn't work on his chess at all. He works on it, but alone, without assistants, and considerably less than his colleagues. As they say, 'for pleasure', for his own amusement. This turns out to be enough for him to be considered a master of such sharp and unconventional openings as the Grünfeld Defence and the Marshall Counterattack. He is also exceptionally good in the classical Ruy Lopez – for both colours. Svidler also plays 1.d4 as White, but he still hasn't become truly ambidextrous, by his own admission – playing 1.e4 is easier for him. Recently he has started his games with the moves 1.♘f3 and 1.c4 more often – with the idea of simply getting lively, fully-fledged play. In the Super Final this strategy completely justified itself – he won two crucial games that way, against Kramnik and Nepomniachtchi. But against lower-rated players, who don't have super-preparation in the opening and aren't capable of drying up the game, he still enthusiastically starts with the king's pawn move.

Svidler rarely sits at the board – as a rule he wanders around the hall or relaxes in the players' room. He doesn't get into time-trouble very often – when he's in good form he plays quickly and confidently. I watched him for the entire Super Final, because it was Peter who was the main headliner of the tournament.

It's impossible to say that he hides his emotions – with my well-known powers of observation it was quite possible to see exactly how he evaluated his position. At moments of high intellectual tension he sits on his chair, relaxes, partly closes his eyes and sometimes even moves his lips slightly, as if he is praying. Then he resembles Nero Wolfe, who has almost solved the mystery and is ready to reveal his latest murderer to the surprised simpleton Inspector Cramer.

> 'Svidler's games will never stink later, to recall Tal's beautiful metaphor. This is pure, distilled chess talent.'

Svidler's analysis after a game is almost better than a show presenting chess to fans. Spectators don't often get into the press centre, but thanks to our video broadcast (video.russiachess.org) anyone could watch Peter examining a game he had just played. Deep analysis, surprising and paradoxical ideas, non-stop self-deprecation and wonderful erudition are his distinguishing features. He never refuses an interview or an autograph, or an answer to a question from a journalist or fan, and readily laughs at a good joke. I talked to people who have known and been friends with Peter for a long time. They say that his wide range of interests, his good nature and his quick tongue are natural characteristics that were noticeable from his very earliest junior tournaments. The reason here is also on the surface: a classical Petersburg upbringing in a decent intellectual family, where people love and respect each other.

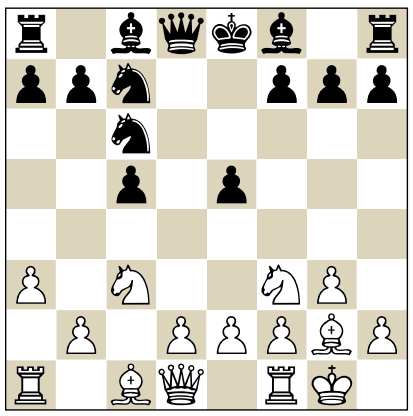
Petersburg is the only European city in Russia, and the extremely European Peter Svidler feels completely comfortable in it. True, he calls himself a 'sofa Petersburger', obviously meaning that he doesn't have to be at work by nine in the morning along with a torrent of his compatriots. But I immediately recalled another 'sofa Petersburger', one of the most charming heroes of classic Russian literature, Ilya Ilyich Oblomov. Recently I reread Goncharov's great novel and found that Ilya Ilyich, whom we were wrongly taught to despise at school, in fact was a kind, upstanding and noble person, very sincere and honest. Speaking in general, Svidler is an Oblomov with talent, and talent of such a magnitude that it determines the direction of his personality. That kind of talent would push even Oblomov off the sofa and sit him down at the chess board.

From childhood our parents and teachers drum into us that talent alone isn't enough. That we have to make an effort, work on ourselves, overcome difficulties, and only then will Lady Luck turn her shining face towards us, the honest toilers. Our parents and teachers are probably right. That's how it is most of the time. But it can also be a different way. I saw one such exception with my own eyes at the M.M. Botvinnik Central House of the Chess Player in Moscow, on Gogolevsky Boulevard, in August 2011.

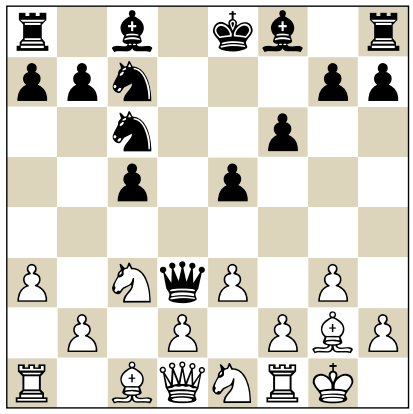
NOTES BY
Peter Svidler

EO 36.7 – A34
Peter Svidler
Ian Nepomniachtchi
Moscow 2011 (6)

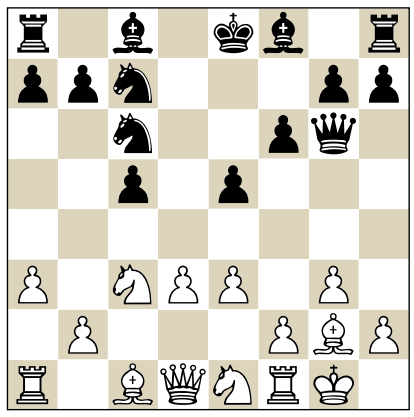
1.♘f3
My hard-hitting weapon for the event.
1...c5
Ian used to play the Anti-Grünfeld exclusively, much as I had for many years, and I fancied I should be able to ask him a question or two there. But he's also been doing some expanding, as witnessed by his choice here.
2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6
The topical Kazan line: 3...e5 4.e3 ♘f6 5.d4 e4 6.♘e5 – had been seen in Kramnik-Nepo a few days earlier. Somewhat painfully for a large number of participants who spent sleepless nights on this position during the Candidates', the game did not shed any particular new light on this highly interesting line, as both players took turns misremembering their preparation.
4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♗g2 ♘c7 7.0-0 e5 8.a3
Following another of Kramnik's games from this event, this time against Timofeev.



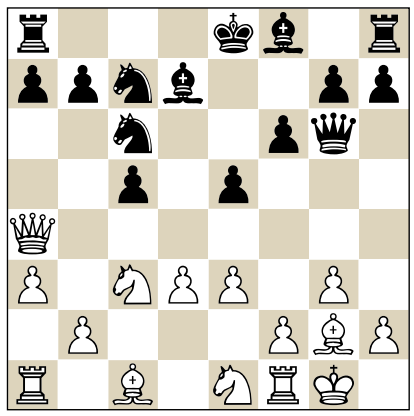
8...f6!?
Artyom chose the less principled 8...♗e7, and after 9.b4 0-0 10.bxc5 ♗xc5 11.♗b2 ♖e8 12.♖c1 ♗f8 13.♘e4 ♖b8 14.d3 Kramnik obtained a pleasant plus, which he converted into a full point in a rather nice game.
As I and Alexander Grischuk were walking back to the hotel that day, we briefly discussed this game, and Alex mentioned 8...f6 as the more critical try. Always on the lookout for free info, I asked him what White should do there. 'Marin suggests 9.e3', was the reply. I nodded and thought nothing of it for the next five days.
9.e3
White wants to play 10.d4, trying to utilize the fact that Black is somewhat behind in development. This idea is quite well-known in some Maroczy positions, but here White is obviously a tempo up compared to those lines, which makes this pawn sac even more potent.
9...♕d3 Quite logically, Ian does not want to cede the initiative that easily.
10.♘e1
I was briefly tempted by 10.♘h4, but it is very solidly met by 10...♗e6 11.♗e4 ♕d7 12.♕h5+ ♗f7, when 13.♘g6 0-0-0 achieves nothing at all.



10...♕g6
It was also possible to go back: 10...♕d7 11.♘c2 ♗e7 (11...c4 12.f4) 12.♕h5+ (12.♖b1 0-0 13.b4 c4 14.♕e2 ♕d3 15.♕xd3 cxd3 16.♘a1! is a somewhat bizarre computer line leading to a very sharp and unclear endgame) 12...g6 13.♕e2 0-0, and Black is not doing that badly, although after 14.b4 I would pick White. The text-move is more logical.
11.d3
11.b4 was not much to my liking: 11...cxb4 12.axb4 ♗xb4 13.♕a4 ♗xc3 14.♗xc6+ bxc6 15.♕xc6+ ♗d7 16.♕xc3 ♘e6, and Black is very comfortable.
I briefly considered 11.d4!? cxd4 12.exd4 ♘xd4 13.♗e3, but did not like 13...♗g4, and decided to shelve the ambitious pawn breaks for a while.



11...♗e6
A very logical move – Black wants to meet ♘f3 or ♘c2 with ...♖d8 or even ...0-0-0.
Black could have begun with 11...♗e7, and after 12.♕b3 (12.♘c2 ♗g4! or 12.♘f3 ♗e6 13.d4 0-0-0 are totally unconvincing) 12...♕f7 13.♘d5 ♗d6 14.♕c4 the position is completely unclear. The text-move spoiled nothing, though.
12.♕a4 ♗d7



13.♘b5
13.♕b3 looks more logical, and there was nothing wrong with it at all, but the knight on c7 does a fine job of cementing Black's queenside, and covers a lot of important squares, so I decided to trade it off.
13...♘xb5
After 13...♘e6 14.♗d5 (or 14.f4 exf4 15.gxf4 f5 16.♘f3) 14...♘cd8 15.♕b3 a6 16.♘c3 Black's coordination is somewhat disrupted.
14.♕xb5 ♖b8
14...♘d8 15.♕c4 ♕f7 is a safer alter-

native, but it would be fair to say Ian was not looking for safety much during this game.

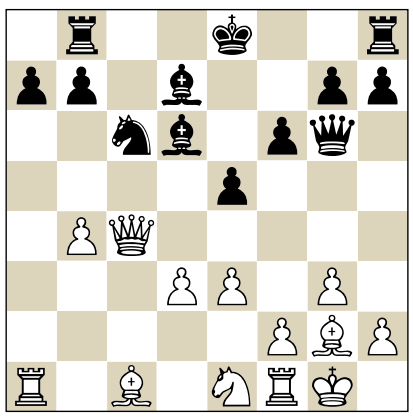
15.♕c4

Getting ready for the pawn breaks.

15...♗d6

15...b5 is met by 16.♕b3! (but not 16.♕c3 ♕f7!, and Black solves all his problems in an instant) 16...♗e7 (16...c4 17.♕c3 does not look very attractive) 17.♗d2.

16.b4 cxb4 17.axb4



17...♔e7

This is a bit too fancy. The desire to connect the rooks is very understandable, but the awkward position of the king will begin to tell if White ever develops his pieces further than the back rank.

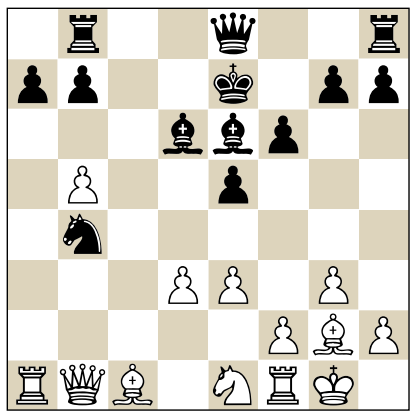
17...♘xb4 was simple and good: after 18.♗d2 (18.♖xa7 ♖c8) 18...♘c6 the machine likes White, but suggests that the best move in the position is 19.♕b3!?. It is too early for 19.d4 e4! 20.f3 h5 21.fxe4 h4 22.♕d5 ♔e7, with a mess, or 19.♘c2 ♔e7 20.♘b4 ♖hc8, and Black is perfectly fine at least – which must mean it is all less than straightforward. Black still has to solve the centralized king problem, and White has all kinds of Volga-like play against ...a7 and ...b7 – but so far, Black is a pawn up, and can even claim he has more pieces in play.

18.b5 ♘b4 19.♕b3

An important little finesse: after 19.♗d2 ♗e6! 20.♕h4 ♘xd3 21.♖xa7 (21.♗e4 ♗f5 22.♗xf5 ♕xf5 23.e4 ♘xe1!, and Black is on top) 21...♘c5 White does not have much.

19...♗e6 20.♕b1 ♕e8

Black's life is not very easy after 20...a6 21.♗d2 ♘d5 22.bxa6 bxa6 23.♕d1, but it was probably preferable to the text.



21.♖xa7

However, this is a mistake. I considered 21.♖a5!, but rejected it in view of 21...a6 (21...♕d8 22.♖xa7 ♕b6 23.♖a1 ♕xb5 24.♗d2 is a very bad version of the game – Black is in deep trouble) 22.♗a3 b6 23.♖xa6! ♘xa6 24.♗xd6+ ♔xd6 25.bxa6 ♕a4!, and the proud passer is about to fall, while there are no immediate threats. To my great chagrin, the escape artist took about 30 seconds to start claiming that White is almost winning after 26.

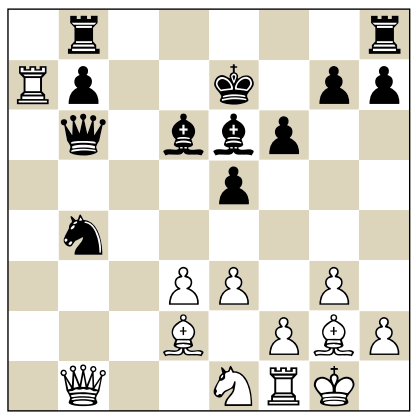
> 'Always on the lookout for free info, I asked him what White should do there. "Marin suggests 9.e3", was the reply. I nodded and thought nothing of it for the next five days.'

d4!, and the façade begins to crumble: 26...exd4 27.♘f3! dxe3 28.fxe3, and once the knight lands on d4 it all gets rather bleak for Black.

21...♕xb5 Now Black is (almost) fine, and for a while Ian defended with great resourcefulness.

22.♗d2 ♕b6

22...♖hc8 23.♖a3! (23.♘c2? ♕c5) does not help very much.



23.♖a3! Much stronger than 23.♖a4 ♘d5 24.♕a1 ♖hc8 25.♘f3 ♕b5, and there is not much left of White's edge.

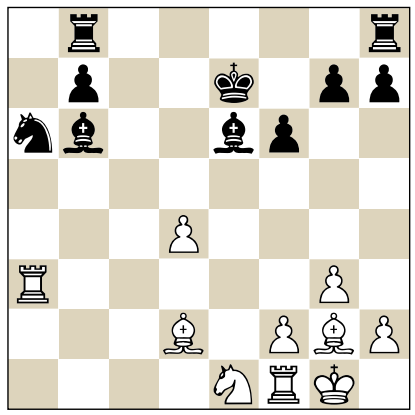
23...♗c5! Once again best – neither 23...♘d5 24.♖b3, 23...♖hc8 24.d4 exd4 25.♘f3! (even stronger than the immediate 25.♕xh7) or 23...♖bc8 24.♘f3 can even remotely satisfy.

24.d4 exd4 24...♘c6 25.♕xb6 ♗xb6 26.d5 ♖hd8 27.♖d3 is not very good.

25.exd4 ♘a6 25...♘c6? once again loses: 26.♕xb6 ♗xb6 27.d5 ♖bd8 28.♗e3!.

26.♕xb6 ♗xb6

There is not much material left, and with accurate defending Black should be fine, but he still faces some problems.



27.♗f4

It was interesting to start with 27.d5

♗d7 28.♗f4 ♗c7 29.d6+ ♗xd6 30.♖e3+, and White is in fact pressing after 30...♗e6 31.♗d5 ♘c7 32.♗xe6 ♘xe6 33.♘d3! g5 34.♗xd6+ ♔xd6 35.♖d1, but I was beginning to get short on time, and decided to play the most natural move.

27...♗c7

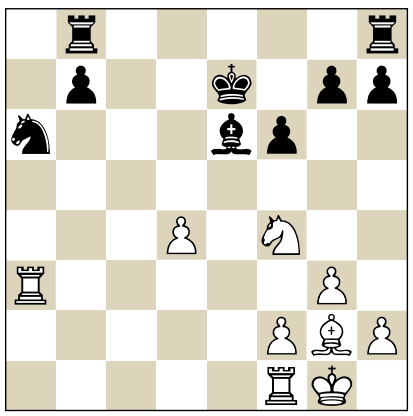
The dangers facing Black are well-illustrated by this long comp line: 27...♖bd8 28.♗xb7 (28.♘c2!?) 28...♘b4 29.♘f3 ♗xd4 (it has to be mentioned that Black can, and perhaps should, bail out here by playing 29...♗d5, and a draw is the most likely result) 30.♗e4 ♔f7 31.♗d2 ♗c5 32.♖c1 ♗e7 33.♖a7 ♖d7 34.♖xd7 ♗xd7 35.♖c7 ♖d8 36.♖b7, and despite the dearth of material on the board, Black is still suffering due to very poor coordination.

28.♘d3

I did not want to get involved in 28.♖xa6 bxa6 29.♗xc7 ♖bc8! 30.♗b6 (30.d5 ♖xc7 31.dxe6 ♖c1 is fine for Black) 30...♗c4 31.♘f3 ♗xf1 32.♗xf1 ♖c1.

28...♗xf4 29.♘xf4

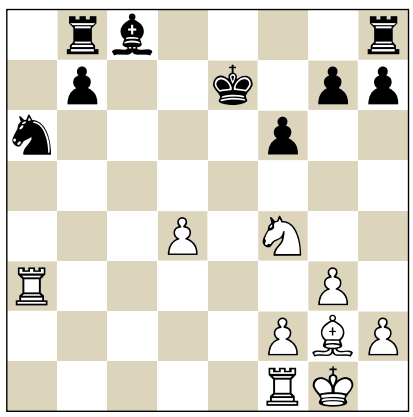
White is clearly better – even more so than I thought during the game. In fact, the best option for Black seems to be to abandon the b7 pawn straightaway by playing 29...♗d7.



29...♗c8

As said, better seemed 29...♗d7 30.♖b1 ♖hd8, trying to exchange some pieces and hope to hold the 4 vs 3.

The move both of us felt was best during the game, 29...♗c4, is in fact not very good due to 30.♖e1+ ♔d6 31.♖b1! b6 32.♘h5! ♖hg8 33.♖c1, and Black is beginning to feel very shaky. The move chosen by Ian I did not expect at all, and I immediately erred in reply.

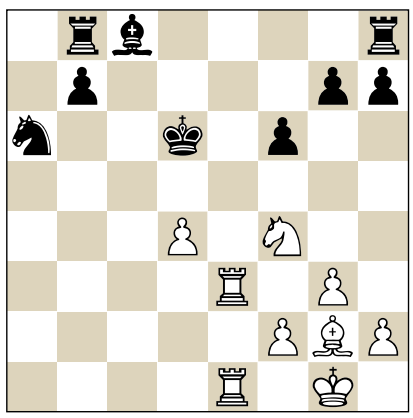


30.♖e1+?

30.♖b1! ♘c7 31.♖e3+ ♔d8 32.♖b6 would give White a very big edge.

30...♔d6 31.♖ae3

Continuing with the wrong plan. I should have played 31.♖a5 ♘c7 32.♖c5 ♗d7 33.♘d5 ♘a8 34.♘c3.



31...♘b4?

But after this move Black is once again nearly lost. He should have corrected his mis-step on move 29 and played 31...♗d7! 32.♘h5 ♖hg8 (still to early for 32...♘b4 33.♖b3!) 33.♖e7 ♘b4!, and the kingside expedition will only yield one measly pawn, whereas Black will have real counterplay with his b-passer.

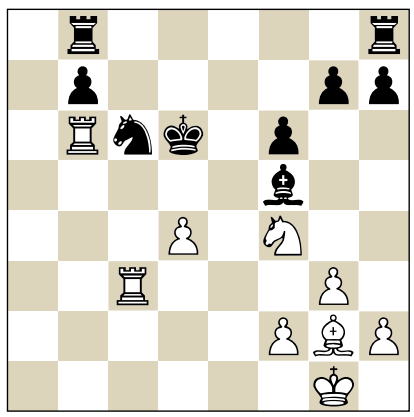
32.♖b1 ♘c6 33.♖c3!

Now White is ready to roll forward.

33...♗f5?!

Black had to play 33...♗d7 34.d5 ♘e5 35.♖b6+ ♔e7 36.d6+ ♔d8 37.♗xb7 ♖e8 38.♘d5, although White should be close to winning here.

34.♖b6



34...♔c7?

Perhaps disappointed by the state of the game, Black collapses. It was still possible to get back to the previous note: 34...♔e7 35.d5 ♘e5 36.♖c7+ ♗d7 37.d6+; but not 34...♔d7? 35.♖xb7+ ♖xb7 36.♗xc6+ ♔c8 37.♗e4+!.

35.♖b5 Black loses a piece.

35...♗d7 36.d5 ♖he8 37.h4 ♖e5 38.♖b2 ♖c8 39.♘d3 ♖ee8 40.dxc6 ♗xc6 41.♘b4

The time-control has passed, and Black resigned.

Eventually, and not without some palpitations on my part, the Kramnik-Morozevich game was drawn, and to my own mild amazement, I found myself the winner of the tournament with a round to spare. ■

Moscow 2011 — **cat. IXX**

					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		TPR
1	**Peter Svidler**	IGM	RUS	2739	*	0	½	½	1	1	1	1	5	2870
2	**Alexander Morozevich**	IGM	RUS	2694	1	*	1	½	½	0	½	1	4½	2820
3	**Alexander Grischuk**	IGM	RUS	2746	½	0	*	1	½	½	1	½	4	2761
4	**Sergey Karjakin**	IGM	RUS	2788	½	½	0	*	1	½	½	1	4	2755
5	**Vladimir Kramnik**	IGM	RUS	2781	0	½	½	0	*	1	1	1	4	2756
6	**Ian Nepomniachtchi**	IGM	RUS	2711	0	1	½	½	0	*	½	½	3	2666
7	**Alexander Galkin**	IGM	RUS	2598	0	½	0	½	0	½	*	½	2	2574
8	**Artyom Timofeev**	IGM	RUS	2665	0	0	½	0	0	½	½	*	1½	2492

Luke McShane

Peering beneath the surface

I recently got the chance to see the documentary film *Bobby Fischer Against the World*, directed by Liz Garbus. Fischer's life has been analysed and dissected in so much detail over the years, that anyone with more than a passing interest in chess is probably quite familiar with the outline of the story. It never seems to lose its appeal.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the fascination with Fischer's story is that it doesn't lend itself to any easy conclusions. It's difficult to avoid the thought that some of those traits that produced such an extraordinary chess player were the same ones which manifested themselves in the vitriolic character of later life, yet who could have predicted things as they turned out?

It reminds me a little of a song I am very fond of – Bob Dylan's 'The Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest'. As in all good ballads, Frankie Lee goes through various capers and ends up dead, yet the song ends by delivering such a trivial sermon that it always sounds to me like a joke ('The moral of this song / Is simply that one should never be / Where one does not belong' is the gist of it). Sometimes it feels to me as if we can't do much better with Fischer's life. Just as with Fischer's story, every time I hear it, I can't help looking for a more satisfactory meaning. And every time I am confounded by the bizarre series of twists and remain none the wiser.

Nonetheless, that doesn't stop me wanting to listen once more, as small but potentially significant new details come to the surface and the sense of mystery is refreshed. So with the many re-tellings of Fischer's life.

For me, the most interesting thing about *Bobby Fischer Against the World* was the number of fresh (at least for me) images and footage which it contained. Many of the images used in the film were captured by the eminent Scottish photojournalist Harry Benson. Over the years, Benson has shot an extraordinary number of famous people in the course of his work for magazines such as *Life*, *Vanity Fair*, *People* and *The New Yorker*. I very much enjoyed reading an interview with Benson which appeared on these pages a couple of issues back, and gives a much fuller flavour of the book than I can do here. He seems to be quite a character himself, with a knack for being in the right place at the right time, through a combination of quick-wittedness, charm and determination.

Benson was in Reykjavik during the 1972 Fischer-Spassky match, covering the event for *Life* magazine, but it turns out that he also took hundreds of other photographs of Bobby as well, which have been released in a new collection titled *Bobby Fischer*. It is a large and stylish hardback book, with a cover picture of Fischer staring out intently from beneath a small visor. It's obvious from the intimacy of the photos that Fischer trusted Benson. He has added some of his own comments alongside the photos, and curiously he suggests that Fischer felt comfortable with him because he knew nothing about chess. If that fact needed proof, it's pretty clear from the fact that a couple of photos feature that bogeyman of chess photography, the wrong coloured rook's corner. Since it's obviously a Ruy Lopez on the board, I presume that must be attributable to a transposed photograph. Purists might be turned off, but the chess is really secondary in these photographs, which are much more concerned with Fischer as a person.

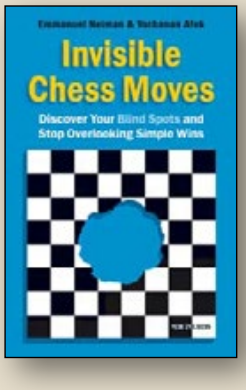
Sometimes he is posing for the camera, but at other times we see a gentler side of the champion – playing with animals, showing a game to a group of children, or just fast asleep. The pictures tell their own story of Fischer's life at the time – the build-up, the pre-match tension and the euphoria. Liz Garbus's film charts a similar path for some time, but moves on to events after 1972 as well.

I was struck by the film critic Peter Bradshaw's review of the film for *The Guardian*. In it, the author drew an interesting comparison between Fischer and the Canadian pianist Glenn Gould. However, I was stunned by the conclusion: 'But Gould, and other geniuses from the arts and sciences, left substantial legacies behind. Fischer leaves behind ... what? The memories of great

matches, a residue of passion and pain. Chess consumes so much human energy and produces no monument.'

'No monument?' I spluttered inwardly as I read that. If that is really a commonly held view outside of the chess world, it's a great shame. Fischer's games may be enjoyed for decades, if not centuries after his death. Amongst non-chessplayers, the game is often acknowledged and respected as an endlessly complex battlefield for mental sparring. Sadly, I suspect that we in the chess world do a poor job of conveying what lies beyond that. Images and stories can convey the tension of chess, and the deep concentration it requires, but it's much harder to convey the beauty which simultaneously suffuses the game.

That internal beauty resides in elegant plans, geometrical patterns, tactical sequences and paradoxical moves. In that respect, I really enjoyed a new



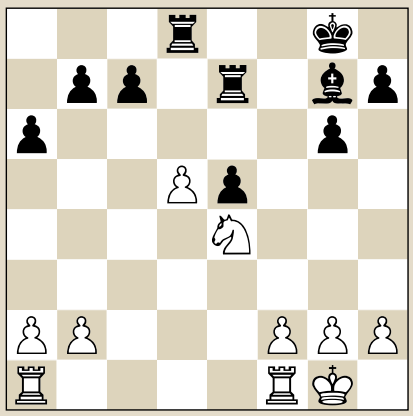
Invisible Chess Moves
Emmanuel Neiman &
Yochanan Afek
New In Chess 2011

release called *Invisible Chess Moves*, by Emmanuel Neiman & Yochanan Afek. Actually, I call it a new release, but it appears the book was translated and expanded from *Les coups invisibles aux échecs* (Afek & Neiman, Payot 2009). I don't know how the 2011 edition compares with the original, but I'm glad that New In Chess have published a version in English.

In fact, *Invisible Chess Moves* is not directly concerned with beautiful chess moves, but rather ones which escaped the players' attention. It just happens that a majority of those moves are also very attractive by virtue of their paradoxical nature, which may well be what motivated the authors to investigate them in the first place.

As they put it, 'How can it be that players who are capable of calculating ten moves ahead for hours on end, fail to see a one-move win? More remarkably, in many cases *both* players make these oversights. Of course, it is always possible for a high-level player to make an elementary mistake. But normally speaking the probability of double blindness should be very slight.' The authors believe that certain types of moves are particularly hard to spot, and they have looked at lots of situations where that occurs. They divide these into 'objectively invisible' moves, involving for example intermediate moves, quiet moves, backward knight moves, self-pinning moves, and 'subjectively invisible' moves, which are positionally compromising or depend on psychological factors, such as missing opportunities just because the position is assumed to be hopeless. Naturally, such dividing lines are questionable – arguably backward knight moves are, in some abstract way, anti-positional as well. But the categorisation is useful nonetheless.

Above all, the authors have found a wealth of inspiring material. I was pleased to see the authors acknowledge amongst their sources one of my favourite early chess books, *Blunders and Brilliancies* by Ian Moss and Moe Mullen. I did recall a few positions from that book, but there was also no shortage of unfamiliar examples. Here's one I really liked, played by a young Judit Polgar (page 127).



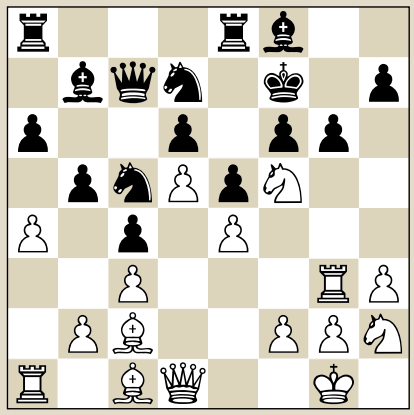
Polgar-Lazic
Dortmund 1990
position after 21...♖d8

The position looks equal, with White's good central knight compensating for the weakness of her d-pawn. Which move gives White an edge?

The standard placing of the rooks would be ♖fd1 followed by ♖ac1, with some pressure on c7. That would be 'ideal': one rook on the semi-open file and the other behind the most advanced pawn. Nevertheless, the young Hungarian preferred the subtle **22.♖ad1!!** The normal 22.♖fd1 was worse, simply because after 22...♖ed7 23.♖dc1? (23.♘c3 is better, when Black has the advantage after the typical pawn push 23...e4!) 23...♖xd5 wins a pawn, as after 24.♖xc7?? there is a back rank mate beginning with 24...♖d1+. **22...♖ed7 23.♖c1!** Now White places the rook on the open file, with a slight advantage.

So simple, and yet so crucial. Arguably White's advantage is already more than a slight one. Judit went on to convert smoothly.

Here's a theme which was quite unfamiliar to me – what the authors term a 'residual image' form of invisibility. This is when a piece has left a square, but it becomes difficult to visualize this in calculation, perhaps because that square may subsequently be used by a different piece, but that possibility was camouflaged by the original position. An example will help, of course:



Zubarev-Lechtynsky
Pardubice 2006
position after 21...♔f7

22.♕h5!! gxh5 It's too late for

Through the Luking Glass

22...♔g8 because of 23.♖xg6+ hxg6 24.♕xg6+ ♔h8 25.♘g4 (or 25.♗h6+–) with the idea ♘gh6, or first ♕h5, with mate.

23.♗d1! Using the vacated square to give mate on the other side of the board.

23...♗xd5 24.exd5

The only remaining try for Black is 24...♗g7 25.♖xg7+ ♔f8, but then comes 26.♗h6, threatening both ♖g3 and ♗h5. Mate is unavoidable.

The point is well made, though, of course, 'residual image' is not the only theme in the mix here. This combination is also well concealed by the fact that it involves giving up a whole queen and following up with a quiet move.

The book also contains a good number of exercises for solving, both interspersed with the examples, and in their own section at the end. The only problem with those was that, being accustomed to so many wonderful tactics on the preceding pages, I had to resist the temptation just to look at the answers!

I very much enjoyed this book, but if there was an aspect which didn't appeal, it was the publisher's sales pitch tacked onto the back cover. 'Your results at the board will improve dramatically because your brain will stop blocking winning ideas'. I may be misrepresenting them, but I didn't get the impression that was really the authors' focus, and strongly suspect that those readers who get the most out of this book will be the ones who take pleasure in the examples, rather than the ones striving like plumbers to unblock their brains. I wouldn't buy a cookery book on the grounds that it would 'dramatically improve my cooking' – it should be taken for granted that a well-written and entertaining book will have a positive effect in that direction. Occasionally, the self-improvement angle is appropriate, but it seems to be attached to rather a lot of books these days (and not only by New In Chess).

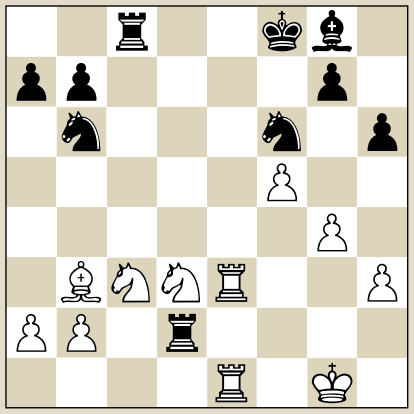
A book which judged its back cover slightly better was Quality Chess' *Tactimania*, a puzzle book written by Glenn Flear. 'The reader will be challenged by the puzzles and entertained by the manga-style illustrations that feature throughout.'

Tactimania
Glenn Flear
Quality Press 2011

That's certainly something different! We learn that Glenn Flear's eldest son, James, is a computer artist who contributed the artwork. The types who like their puzzle books dense and austere may not see the point, but I liked the pictures, with their gentle humour sprinkled throughout. Along with the clean presentation of the puzzles, it makes for an attractive book all-round.

Interestingly Glenn has chosen to select the puzzles almost exclusively from his own games, with the remainder from those of his wife Christine, in order to avoid an overly familiar selection. (In modest fashion, that also includes a number of losses.) The problems are arranged into a dozen different themes, arranged by difficulty within each theme.

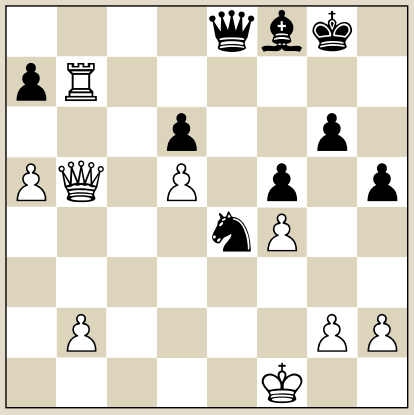
Initially, I didn't find any especially difficult, but they quickly became more challenging, and the trickier ones are marked as such. Here's one of the easier 'apprentice' level teasers, which also provides a neat example of the 'invisible' backwards knight move which Afek and Neiman discuss. In this case, Harikrishna didn't need the chapter title 'Punishing Precariously Placed Pieces' as a clue: (page 125).



Harikrishna-Flear
Hastings 2002/03
position after 25...♗g8

26.♘b1! and White won quickly.

To conclude, here's one of the examples which introduces the 'Tricky Decisions' section, to give an idea of the tougher level of puzzle. The answer requires some explanation, and many answers go into some detail in this fashion.



Flear-Adrian
France 1997
position after 27.♕b5

The question in this example could be: How to escape with black?

27...♘d2+! The exchange of queens after both 27...♕c8? 28.♕c6 and 27...♕xb5+?! 28.♖xb5 would be difficult for Black due to White's queenside majority.

28.♔f2 ♕e4! But not 28...♘e4+ 29.♔e3! whereupon Black would have to accept a dodgy endgame.

29.♕d7 ♕xf4+ 30.♔e2 ♕e4+!

Also possible was 30...♕f1+ 31.♔xd2 ♕f4+!.

31.♔d1 ♕g4+ 32.♔xd2 ♕d4+ 33.♔c2 ♕c4+ 34.♔b1 ♕d3+ 35.♔a2 ♕xd5+ Draw. ■

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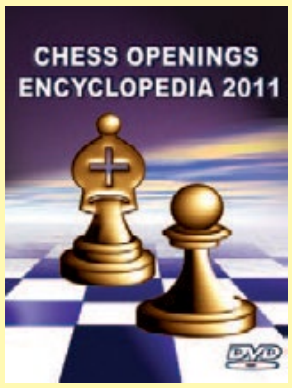

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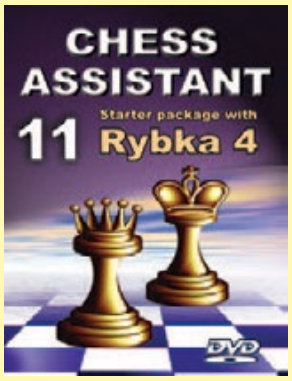

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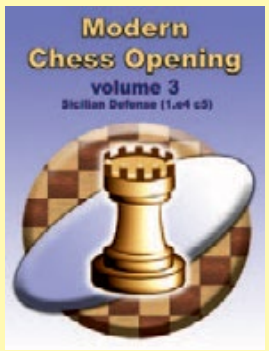

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Hans Ree

Hard Times

No one is better qualified to inform us about the workings of the late Soviet chess federation and its role in FIDE than Yuri Averbakh. At heart a diplomat, he is not the man to give us a tell-all, no holds barred memoir, but nevertheless Hans Ree found many interesting tales in Averbakh's book *Centre-Stage and Behind the Scenes*.

No diagrams, no game scores, just text and some photos. This is a book for lovers of chess history about a period that is gone. To get a mild nuisance out of the way at once, I must express my hope that the lovers of old history still have good eyesight, for many of the pages of this book look as if the printer's ink supply was nearing its end.

Though Averbakh's life was certainly not without hardship, he is well aware that he might be called lucky to have sailed through unharmed to a ripe old age. Many of his friends were less lucky.

At the start, Averbakh sketches the political background of his life and chess career. The title of this short foreword is 'One cannot choose one's time' and indeed, a great part of the time of his life was a gruesome period for Europe and especially for Russia.

Averbakh lived through Stalin's waves of terror and through the Great Patriotic War, monstrous events that altogether may have taken the lives of 50 million Soviet citizens, though nobody dares to give an even approximately accurate estimate. Later there was the collapse of the Soviet Union, the crash of a giant that for long had seemed indestructible. Even the periods of Soviet history that were relatively calm often saw extreme hardship.

Though Averbakh's life was certainly not without hardship, he is well aware that he might be called lucky to have sailed through unharmed to a ripe old age. Many of his friends were less lucky.

Averbakh was born on 8 February 1922 in Kaluga, not far from Moscow. He grew to his greatest strength as a player in the 1950s, when he played in the Candidates' tournament of 1953 – a 28-round double round-robin – and won the Soviet Championship of 1954, one-and-a-half points ahead of a field that included Kortchnoi, Taimanov and Petrosian.

Though he kept playing occasionally in tournaments until the early '90s, his career as one of the world's top players effectively ended fairly early by his taking up a host of other chess functions.

He became chief editor of the important magazines *Shakhmaty v SSSR* and *Shakhmatny Bulletin*, author of a classic series of endgame books, composer of many endgame studies, arbiter, trainer, President of the Soviet chess federation and a FIDE official in many positions. Averbakh certainly has seen the chess world from all sides.

Accomplished diplomats

A mild-mannered man, he managed to defend the interests of the Soviet chess federation within FIDE while avoiding personal confrontations with other parties who looked after their own interests or tried to be neutral, like Max Euwe.

Averbakh relates how, during an Extraordinary Congress of FIDE in 1975, where Bobby Fischer's demands for the championship match against Karpov were discussed, he approached Euwe one day, saying: 'I must apologize to you in advance, but I have been ordered by the Sports Committee to speak in criticism of you.' 'I sympathize with you', Euwe smiled.

Apart from the fact that it seems difficult to smile a whole sentence, this exchange seems typical of both Averbakh and Euwe.

Oh, how carefully politicians have to tread. In a later chapter Averbakh writes about a discussion by the FIDE Executive Board about where to hold the 1982 Olympiad, in Lucerne, Switzerland, or Tripoli, Libya. As I understand it, Campomanes had already shown his loyalty to the Arab cause in this matter.

At the meeting of the Executive Board, Averbakh voted for Switzerland, and this became the majority decision. Then Campo exclaimed to him: 'But I thought you would vote for Libya. After all, everybody knows that the Soviets support Gaddafi. Mind you, it would not have changed anything, because in that case I would have voted for the Swiss.'

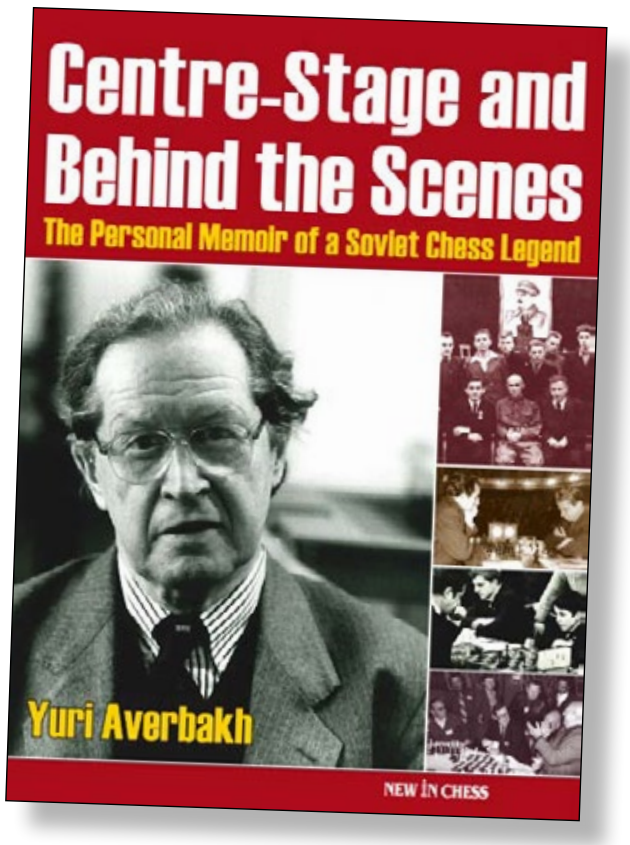
Was Campo sincere? Anyway, if that exclamation reflected his real intentions, it would have been a sensible course of action. He intended to take over FIDE as President at the FIDE Congress during the 1982 Olympiad. Had he done this in Tripoli, the residence of Gaddafi, who already then was considered a brutal assassin, it might have become a chip on his shoulder.

Courting Libya while planning to vote for Switzerland. Do they have no principles, these politicians? Maybe they are unjustly maligned. Like travelling salesmen of yore, many of them can only succeed because they possess, apart from their bag of tricks, a fundamental trait which can be seen as a weakness but also as a form of kindness: a genuine desire to be liked and make everybody happy. We should believe in the sincerity of the politician's embrace, but not be fooled by it, since the next second he will embrace our mortal enemy with equal sincerity.

Love the pieces

With eyes closed I approached my chess board upon which the pieces were randomly placed, wanting to find out if I could feel whether a piece was white or black. Yes, I can! With every piece my guess was correct, and I was happy to find that I am still connected to my pieces, at least in this respect.

Boris Spassky has said that as a child he wanted to steal the white queen in order to caress it in his trouser pocket. He didn't do it and later he said that he



owed his world title to this, because in chess Justice reigns and a thief of a chess piece would never become World Champion.

Averbakh established his intimate relation with the pieces already even before he knew what chess was. While his father and his uncle were playing a game, he had an irresistible urge to lick the shiny lacquered pieces. He doesn't say if he had a favourite piece to lick. My piece to lick or caress would be the black knight, though in competitions I always preferred a white bishop.

Not just wine and roses

Let me throw in an anecdote that has nothing to do with Averbakh. Once upon a time there was a strong Dutch IM who was a teacher of mathematics at a secondary school. When the children entered his classroom, they always saw him sitting near the blackboard studying chess with a pocket set and a book or magazine. Then he would raise his eyes, look disdainfully at his flock and say: 'I suppose this is one thing these so-called Eastern-European state amateurs don't have to cope with.' One of his pupils told me that it was only much later that he understood the meaning of this ever-returning ritual.

We used to think that the 'state amateurs' had it easy with their government grants, but we were wrong. For instance, Averbakh writes that even around 1957, when he was already a grandmaster, a former World Championship Candidate and a former champion of the USSR, he and his wife, child and maid – a maid? – had just 11.8 square metres of living space in a communal apartment. He applied for a place on the waiting list for improved accommodation, but the Workers Commission refused his request.

Then he sought help at a higher level, contacting the First Secretary of the Party's Moscow Regional Committee, with the result that he was able to move to another house, where he was given a 19 square metre room in a three-room apartment that he shared with the later grandmaster Evgeny Vasiukov and the woman volleyball player Lidia Boldyrev.

The house was mainly occupied by sportspeople, and Averbakh saw how successful athletes were discarded once their time was up and afterwards were barely able to make ends meet. Once he asked sports officials about the fate of retired sportspeople and got the reply that they were not paid to worry about this.

He is quite critical about the way sportsmen and sportswomen were selected to be prepared for international competitions. All over the country, selectors were looking for people over two metres tall to play basketball, for masculine and almost hermaphrodite women, and so on.

In 1963, when the Moscow team was training for the Spartakiad, all the capital's sportsmen from different disciplines were brought together in one place. Averbakh writes: 'It was an unforgettable sight – basketball players,

as thin as pencils, bow-legged squat weightlifters, boxers with huge hands like gorillas, cauliflower ears and squashed noses. Of course, there were exceptions, but in general one got the impression that they were pathological, freak types, which is what had brought them into big-time sport, and allowed them to achieve better results than normal people.'

No, being a Soviet state amateur was not only wine and roses, and Averbakh's later chess career wasn't either. Highly placed as he was, he was still regularly forbidden to travel abroad. Not because he was a difficult rebel; it could happen to almost anyone. Meting out random punishments is a way to enforce discipline, as in Voltaire's *Candide*, where it is said that 'in this country it is wise to kill an admiral now and then to encourage the others.'

Just two girls per night

The common perception of the infallible well-oiled Soviet chess machine is not borne out by the chapter on the Candidates' tournament of 1953 in Switzerland. From Averbakh's account one gets the impression that many things were handled by the Soviet group in a way that seems decidedly amateurish.

His own preparation for the tournament can certainly be called professional. He dutifully collected his opponents' games and examined their habits in the opening, the middlegame and the endgame. Then it occurred to him that his opponents would do the same and that it would be useful to find out how his own file would appear to them.

Making his own file, a self-portrait, Averbakh found that his main weakness was his uncertain play in double-edged positions. He came to the conclusion that he should find a method to activate his subconscious at the board at the right moment.

When he spoke about this problem with an actor who had been a pupil of the famous theatre director Konstantin Stanislavski, the actor gave him Stanislavski's book *The Actor Prepares*. Here a method was described for the actor to evoke emotions and activate his subconscious by means of a special technique. Averbakh was interested, but didn't have the time to work out a comparable method for chess players.

The Soviet delegation for the 28-round Candidates' tournament in Switzerland consisted of 21 people, which may seem a lot but in fact was rather modest. There were nine players, eight seconds (Bronstein didn't have one), a trainer, a delegation chief, a deputy chief and an interpreter.

The deputy chief and the interpreter were from the KGB, but according to Averbakh they didn't really trouble the players. The interpreter was a nice fellow who at the start had said to them: 'Take care, boys, not a word about politics while I am around.'

It was an iron law that the entire delegation stayed in the same hotel, and you'd think that for such a big group reservations would have been made long in advance. But no, nothing at all had been done in this regard.

Upon their arrival in Neuhausen the group had to find a hotel, which was not easy. They found one that was more or less suitable and close to the town, but it didn't have enough rooms. The strongest players got a single room with a nice view of a waterfall. Others, like Averbakh, had to share one with their second, *sans* waterfall.

At the half-way point, the tournament was to move from Neuhausen to Zurich, and Alexander Kotov and the interpreter were sent there as a reconnaissance party to find a hotel. They made a nice holiday trip of it and went to see a movie first, so that it was already dark when they finally went searching for a hotel.

When the group arrived there, they were greeted by the hotel owner with the words: 'I see that there are young people with you. Please note that they cannot bring in more than two girls per night.' The hotel was located in the middle of the red-light district, just opposite a brothel, and was fittingly named 'das Goldene Schwert', the Golden Sword. A few days later the group was able to move to a quieter neighbourhood.

The Soviet players were so strong that they could afford a bit of organizational sloppiness. Smyslov won the tournament, two points ahead of Bronstein, Keres and Reshevsky.

Changing perspectives

The story about Neuhausen-Zurich 1953 appeared in almost the same form in the German magazine *Schach* in 2007. I have the impression that through the years Averbakh worked slowly but steadily on his memoirs, which appeared in Russian in 2003. A few times I was intrigued by the question when exactly he had written a cer-

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tain part, usually when his account differed in interesting ways from what he has said elsewhere.

At the Candidates' tournament in Budapest 1950, Boleslavsky was leading Bronstein by a point with two rounds to go. Boleslavsky made two draws in the last two rounds, Bronstein caught up by winning twice. The play-off was narrowly won by Bronstein, who became Botvinnik's challenger.

In this book Averbakh takes events at face value, writing about Boleslavsky's draw after 16 moves as White against Stahlberg in the last round: 'This, of course, was a psychological mistake that played into Bronstein's hands.'

But in 2002, in an interview at the *ChessCafe* website, Averbakh told a different story. The interviewer, Taylor Kingston, asked: 'Now, Isaac Boleslavsky was leading late in the tournament by a pretty good margin. Then, says Bronstein in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Boleslavsky had a talk with Boris Weinstein and after that he slowed down and allowed Bronstein to tie him for first place.'

Averbakh answered that Boleslavsky was a very good player but not a fighter, and that he was afraid that he wouldn't stand much of a chance against Botvinnik. 'And so together, Boleslavsky, Bronstein and Weinstein, they developed an idea: to try to organize a three-way match between Botvinnik, Boleslavsky and Bronstein.'

Boleslavsky making a psychological mistake by conceding a quick draw, with no mention of Weinstein, or Boleslavsky being persuaded by the former high-ranking KGB official Boris Weinstein to slow down... that is quite a difference. (Genna Sosonko's article on Weinstein in this issue also supports the second version – ed.)

Another case: the Candidates' tournament of Curaçao 1962. It is generally believed, on the authority of Fischer, Kortchnoi and on account of the game scores, that Petrosian, Geller and Keres had made a pact to draw all their games.

In the book, Averbakh, who was the chief of the Soviet delegation in Curaçao, denies the existence of this pact: 'As far as Keres is concerned, it is laughable to accuse such a gentleman and sportsman as he of a conspiracy.'

Again, in the interview of 2002, Averbakh spoke differently: 'So, we have Petrosian and Geller, these two old friends, and Keres, for practical reasons, decided to draw with them, since then he saves his strength for the last part of the tournament.'

Kingston asked: 'So in your opinion it was Keres' idea as much as anyone else's.' Averbakh: 'No, of course not. Keres could never propose such a thing. No, it could only be proposed by Petrosian.' Or Petrosian's wife, Kingston suggests, and Averbakh concurs.

People usually become more outspoken and candid as they get older. About Budapest and Curaçao Averbakh was more outspoken in 2002 than in this book, which suggests to me that these parts of the book were written earlier.

Botvinnik eats cake

The great Mikhail Botvinnik often comes out badly in the reminiscences of his contemporaries or his pupils. Since the iron fist of the Patriarch has relaxed in the grave, his human frailties, inextricably bound with his path to glory, have been disclosed with a mixture of awe and irritation.

When Averbakh played Botvinnik for the first time, at the Moscow championship of 1943/1944, he was awed and felt as if he was in a dream.

Later he was charmed by Botvinnik's brisk conversation, his way of having a firm and considered opinion on everything.

Between 1955 and 1957 they played many training games, at Botvinnik's request with the radio on at full blast, spouting news about the production volumes of Moscow factories, milk yields and potato crops. This was to inure Botvinnik to the noise of spectators during official events. Earlier, Viacheslav Ragozin had been ordered by Botvinnik to blow smoke in his face during training games.

In due time Averbakh was to become irritated with Botvinnik's manoeuvres within FIDE to bolster his position at the expense of other Soviet grandmasters, with his claims of being always right even when he was wrong, and with his distrust of other people, which sometimes amounted to outright paranoia.

Once Averbakh's wife came to Botvinnik's dacha, bringing for lunch a fresh cake of the Café National, then famous for the quality of its confectionaries. It was eaten hartily by everyone at the table, except for the host. Botvinnik only took a piece of the cake in the evening, after ascertaining that none of the others had fallen ill.

But wasn't Averbakh his friend and therefore unlikely to poison him? I was reminded of a passage in Andrew Soltis's book *Soviet Chess*: 'At another occasion Botvinnik, his second Averbakh and Estrin were in a car returning from a match game. Averbakh got out when he neared his home, saying, "I'll walk the rest of the way." Botvinnik watched him leave and grimly added, "Well, it's all clear now. He left to show Smyslov our analysis." '

They might have followed Averbakh discretely to find out if he really went to Smyslov, but of course this was unnecessary. Botvinnik knew.

Apart from a short concluding chapter, Averbakh more or less closes his memoirs with the election of Kirsan Ilyumzhinov as FIDE President in 1995. In 2002 for *ChessCafe* he deplored what he called the Eastern way of authoritarian leadership, which had started with Campomanes and was taken up by Ilyumzhinov. Since then he must have found that, relatively speaking, Campomanes was a master of compromise compared to Kirsan's despotic ways, but in the book he refrains from criticism and only observes that the period since 1995 is part of the present, whereas his subject is the past.

He is not the man to open a can of worms. He could have said more than he did, but what he says is often quite interesting. ■

Jan Timman

Hou Yifan's progress

At this point in time, Judit would be the overwhelming favourite, but in another few years this may well be different.

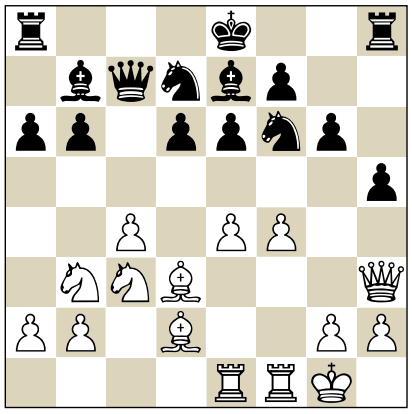
'Hou Yifan seems to be very serious.' This is what Judit Polgar recently said to Lars Grahn in an interview for *Chess*. Grahn had asked her which young female chess player she thought might potentially be the world's number one. Judit also mentioned Humpy Koneru: 'Maybe Humpy Koneru is somebody who will stay there for a long time.'

Judit also suggested that – if she received an attractive offer – she might be willing to play a match for the world title.

The interview took place before the Grand Prix tournament in Rostov-on-Don, where Hou Yifan proved herself convincingly and Humpy disappointed. A match between Judit Polgar and Hou Yifan: an extremely interesting prospect. At this point in time, Judit would be the overwhelming favourite, but in another few years this may well be different.

Would it be possible to compare Judit's and Hou Yifan's careers? This is problematic. In 1990, when she was 14, Judit stopped playing in ladies' tournaments, and three years later, at Hou Yifan's age, she had already got into the top-50. In this respect, the Chinese girl clearly lags behind. Early this year she breached the 2600 line, but after some disappointing results she dived back under it again.

But there are also similarities. Both of them are confirmed 1.e4 players with a distinctly attacking style. And both of them were capable of defeating strong grandmasters at a very young age. At 12 years of age, Hou Yifan crushed up-and-coming top player Vitiugov in the Aeroflot Open.



Hou Yifan-Vitiugov
Moscow 2007
position after 14...h5

Black has just advanced his h-pawn, a well-known strategical move in these kinds of Sicilian positions that entails a certain amount of risk: on the one hand, Black gains territory, on the other, he will have problems finding a safe spot for his king later on.

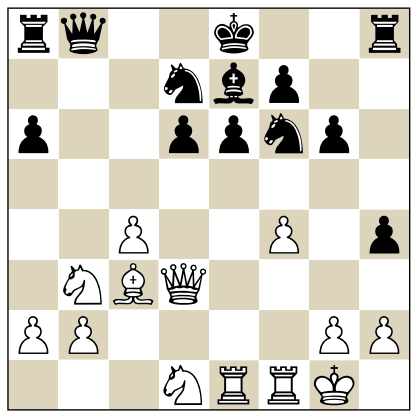
15.♘d1! An excellent plan. White regroups her knight and vacates square c3 for her queen's bishop.

15...b5 A principled advance, but right up White's street. Better was 15...♘c5.

16.♗a5! Before putting the bishop on c3, White forces the black queen to go to a worse square.

16...♕b8 17.♗c3 b4 18.♗xb4 ♗xe4 19.♗c3 The bishop returns to its post. White is exerting strong pressure on the enemy position.

19...♗xd3 20.♕xd3 h4

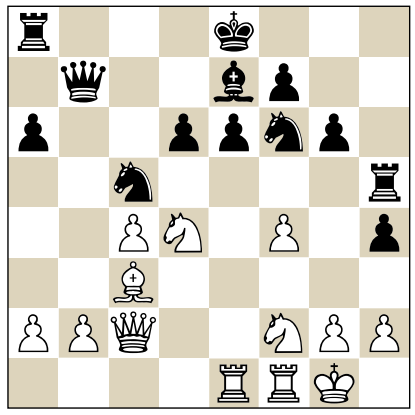


The start of an erroneous plan. Black is going to take his rook to h5, but this does nothing to improve the coordination in his camp. He should have castled, although his slightly weakened king position is not an attractive prospect.

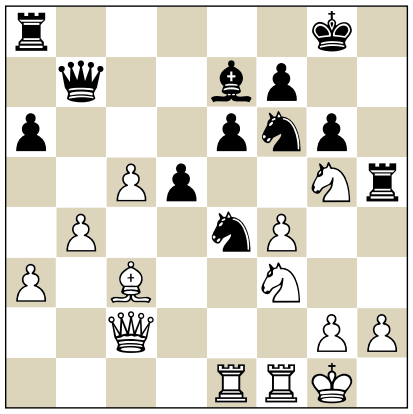
21.♘f2 ♖h5 22.♘d4!

Making optimum use of the lack of coordination in the black camp.

22...♘c5 23.♕c2 ♕b7



24.b4! White is steadily gaining space. **24...h3 25.♘xh3 ♘ce4 26.♘g5 d5 27.c5 ♔f8** His only chance of counterplay was 27...a5.
28.a3 ♔g8 29.♘df3

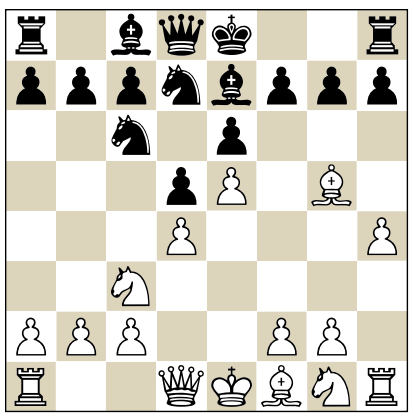


Decisive regrouping. Hou Yifan rounded off the game excellently.

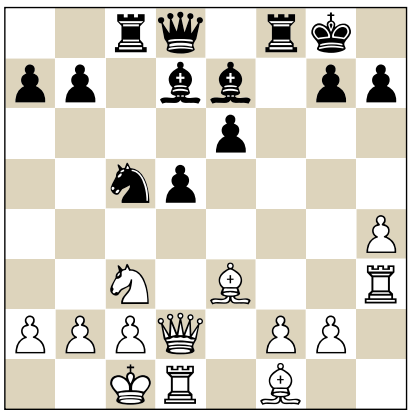
One year later she had her first baptism of fire: the B-group of the Corus tournament. Although she finished below 50 per cent, she defeated another few strong grandmasters. I particularly liked her win over Jan Smeets.

FR 6.2 – C13
Jan Smeets
Hou Yifan
Wijk aan Zee 2008

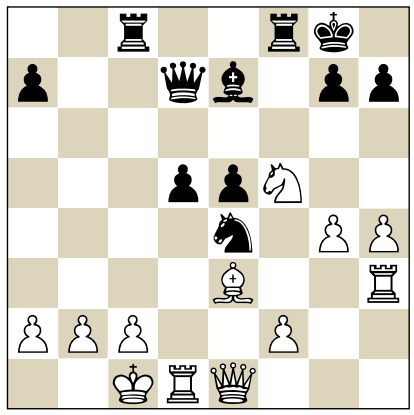
1.e4 e6
Hou Yifan has a clear preference for the French Defence. This choice of opening differs from Judit's, who always plays the Sicilian. The Chinese girl regularly plays that opening as well, e.g. against Nadezhda Kosintseva in Rostov.
2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.h4 ♘c6



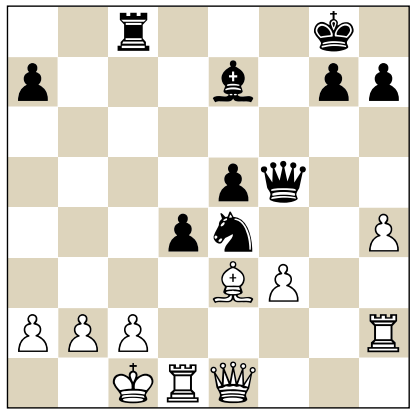
A safe set-up against the Chatard-Alekhine Attack. Because of the pressure on d4 White cannot develop his bishop to d3. This was first played in Euwe-Olland, Amsterdam 1921.
7.♘f3
In Euwe-Maroczy, Amsterdam 1922, there followed 7.♘h3 f6 8.♘f4 ♘dxe5! 9.dxe5 ♘xe5, with good play for Black. 7.♕g4, played twice by Euwe, is an important alternative.
7...♘b6 Olland castled kingside here, but it looks risky.
8.♖h3 White is still dreaming of attacking chances. Swapping on e7 would have been better.
8...f6! Maroczy's breaking move, which is very strong here, too.
9.♗f4 fxe5 10.♘xe5 0-0 11.♕d2 ♘xe5 12.♗xe5 ♘d7 13.♗f4 c5
Black has solved all her opening problems.
14.dxc5 ♘xc5 15.♗e3 ♗d7 16.0-0-0 ♖c8



17.g4
An aggressive advance that fails to have the desired effect. A good strategic move was 17.h5.
17...b5!
Thematic. A white advance on the kingside is met by an advance on the other wing.
18.♗xb5 ♗xb5 19.♘xb5 ♘e4 20.♕e1 ♕d7
Black could simply have captured on h4, with good prospects.
21.♘d4
After this retreat Hou Yifan gets her way. After 21.♕e2 it would have been harder to prove the dangerousness of Black's attack.
21...e5 22.♘f5

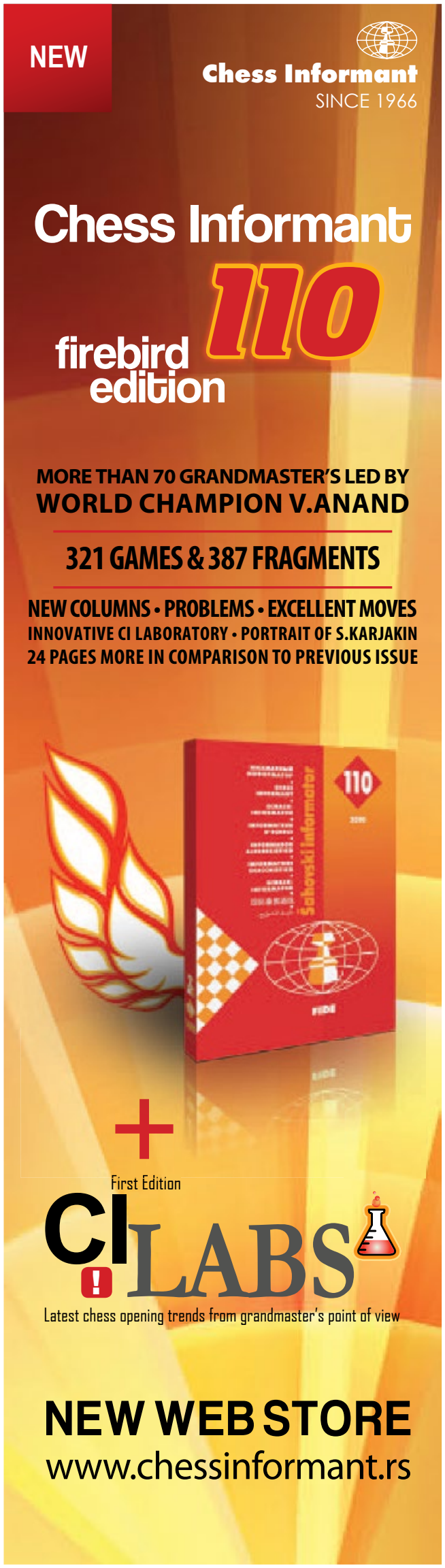


22...♖xf5!
A strong exchange sacrifice.
23.gxf5 ♕xf5 24.♖h2 d4 25.f3



25...♘c3!
The beautiful point of the exchange sacrifice. After 26.bxc3 ♗a3+ Black would have a decisive attack.
26.♗xd4 ♘xd1 27.♗xe5 ♘f2
A subtle way to save the knight. Black remains an exchange up, which eventually suffices for the win.
The computer regards 27...♖d8 as even stronger, but this is a dangerous move to play, as it will leave the knight locked in the enemy camp for a long time.
28.♖xf2 ♗xh4 29.♗c3 ♕f7 30.♔b1 ♖f8 31.a4 a6 32.♗b4 ♗xf2 33.♕xf2 ♕xf3 34.♕c5 ♖d8 35.b3 ♕d5 36.♕c7 ♖e8 37.♗c3 ♕f7 38.♕c6 ♕g6 39.♕d5+ ♔h8 40.♕d7 ♖f8 41.b4 h5
Now that Black has fully consolidated her position it is time for a decisive advance. Hou Yifan's technique turned out to be excellent.

In 2008, Hou Yifan played more than a hundred games. After having played against strong and expe-



rienced grandmasters in Wijk aan Zee she pitted herself against players hundreds of Elo-points below her. In principle it's good for a young player to garner experience, of course, but in this case she overshot the mark. The Soviets used to be of the opinion that their top talents should play only in specially selected tournaments to prevent disappointments. Their career should be one unbroken string of successes. If you follow Judit's career, you will see that she also followed this regime.

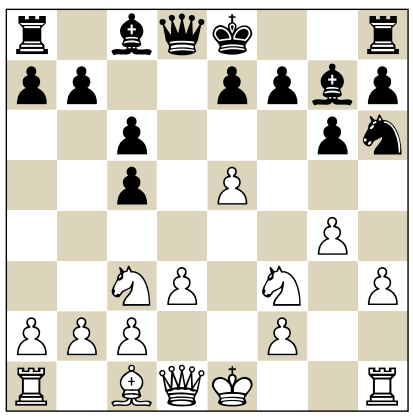
There is no doubt that if Hou Yifan had played less, she would be at a higher level now.

But early this year there were clear signs of progress. In the Chinese championship she scored six out of 11, quite a respectable result. She won a fascinating game against Yu Yangyi, currently China's number four player, who was also born in 1994.

SI 31.9 – B30
Hou Yifan
Yu Yangyi
Xinghua 2011

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 g6 5.h3 ♗g7 6.e5 ♘g8 7.♗xc6 dxc6 8.d3 ♘h6 9.g4

This is what Hou Yifan had played earlier against Vallejo in Wijk aan Zee 2009. White keeps the knight away from f5 and is going to castle queenside – ingredients for a sharp battle.



9...0-0

Vallejo played 9...f5, after which Hou Yifan secured an advantage with 10.exf6 exf6 11.♕e2+ ♔f7 12.♗e3, and ended up winning in style. (See her analysis in New In Chess 2009/2.)

10.♕e2 f6 11.♗e3 ♘f7 12.0-0-0

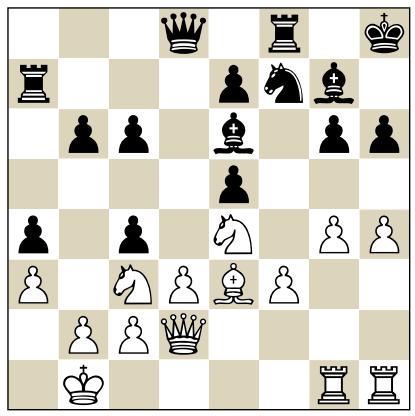
The circumstances being different, White does not swap on f6. She sacrifices the e-pawn, confident that White will have sufficient compensation.

12...fxe5 13.♘d2 b6 14.h4 h6 15.♘de4 ♗e6 16.♖dg1 a5 17.♔b1 a4 18.a3 ♖a7 19.♕d2 ♔h8 20.f3

A position has arisen in which neither player seems to have much chance of undertaking anything. But precisely at this point the fireworks start.

20...c4

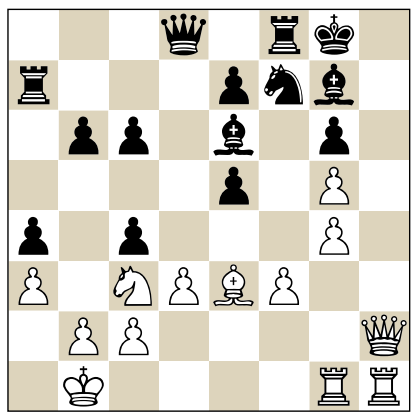
This advance indicates that Black wants to open the d-file.



21.♘g5!?

Judit would probably not have been able to resist the temptation of this knight sacrifice either. Objectively speaking, taking on c4 would have been slightly better.

21...hxg5 22.♕h2 ♔g8 23.hxg5

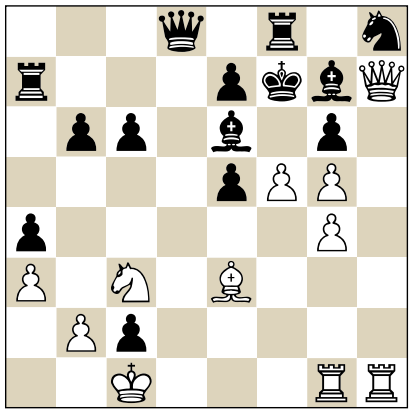


23...♘h8! The best defence. Black locks his knight into the corner, and the g-pawn is now solidly protected.

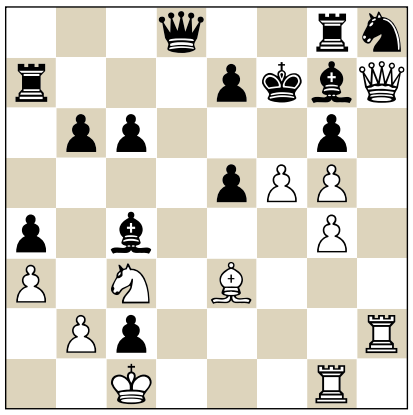
24.♕h7+ ♔f7 25.f4

Again the sharpest continuation.

25...cxd3 And the best reply. Both kings are exposed now.
26.f5 dxc2+ 27.♔c1



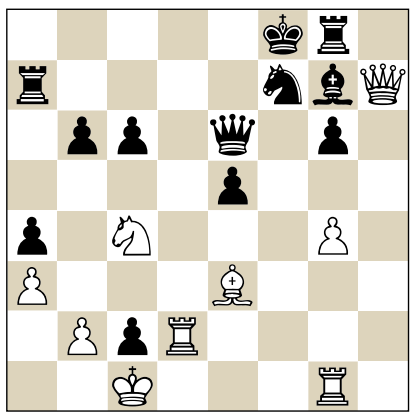
27...♗c4! Yu Yangyi plays excellently here. With the text he takes control of the crucial f1-square.
28.♖h2 ♖g8
It would have taken a superhuman effort to find the move that yields Black an advantage here. 28...♗b3! was a strong move. With hindsight, you can see the reasoning behind this computer find. With one of the white rooks gone from the back rank, White's king is in greater danger, and if Black manages to direct a major piece to d1, there is a potential mating threat. A sample variation would be 29.f6 exf6 30.gxf6 ♖d7! 31.♕xg7+ ♔e6, and Black wins. The text, by the way, is the beginning of a safe route to the draw.



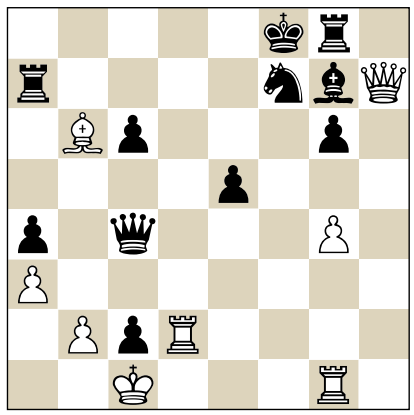
29.f6! The pawn that, nine moves ago, took a cautious step forward, has made great progress.
29...exf6 30.gxf6 ♔e8
The point of the previous moves. The black king is reasonably safe, and the position is dynamically balanced.
31.♖d2 ♕xf6 32.♘e4 ♕e6 33.♘d6+ ♔f8

'There is no doubt that if Hou Yifan had played less, she would be at a higher level now.'

In time-trouble, it becomes incredibly difficult to handle the position perfectly. Stronger was 33...♔e7, and after 34.♕h4+ ♗f6 35.♕h7+ the game might have ended in a draw.
34.♘xc4 ♘f7



35.♗xb6
Obvious but not good, even though it will win White the game. 35.♘xb6 e4 36.♘xa4 would have yielded White a large, probably winning advantage.
35...♕xc4



After this move Yu Yangyi exceeded his time-limit. After 36.♖xc2 the position would have reverted to a dynamic balance. But White couldn't capture the rook, since Black would win after 36.♗xa7 ♗h6 37.g5 ♖g7!.

After the Chinese championship Hou Yifan played three bad tournaments, in Mashdad, Danzhou and New Delhi. This made her success in Rostov all the more welcome – the downward spiral had to be broken.

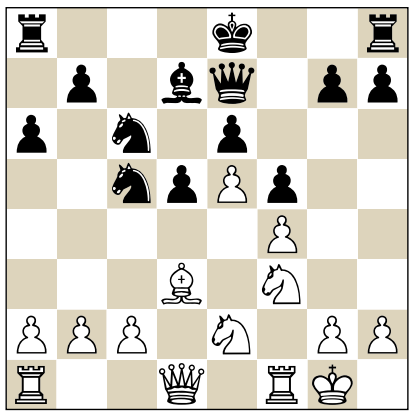
In Round 1 she beat her rival Humpy, again in the time-trouble phase. This first-round win gave wings to Hou Yifan's feet. After seven rounds she had allowed only one draw. She was highly concentrated and did not seem to be troubled by nerves.

The following game is a good example of her powerful play.

FR 6.4 – C14
Ekaterina Kovalevskaya
Hou Yifan
Rostov-on-Don 2011

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♗xe7 ♕xe7 7.f4 a6
Hou Yifan loves the classical main line of the French Defence. With the text she prepares the advance of the c-pawn.
8.♘f3 c5 9.dxc5 ♘c6 10.♗d3

♘xc5 11.0-0 ♗d7 12.♘e2 f5

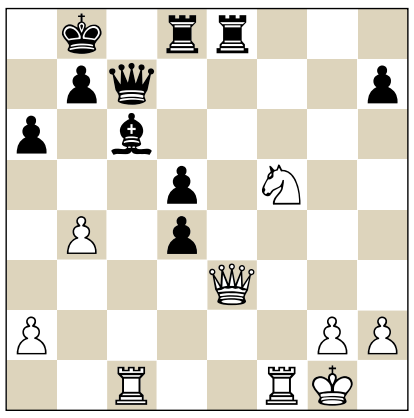


An interesting way to play for a win. Black is going to take back with the g-pawn and then castle queenside.

13.exf6 gxf6 14.♘ed4 ♘xd4 15.♘xd4 0-0-0 16.♕e1 ♖he8 17.♕e3 ♕d6 18.♖ae1 e5 19.fxe5 fxe5 20.♘f5 ♕c7 21.b4 ♘xd3 22.cxd3 ♔b8 23.♖c1 ♗c6 24.d4

A good move played with the wrong intention.

24...exd4



25.♕xd4?

White should have worked towards capturing on d4 with the knight; after 25.♕f2 the position would have been equal. An interesting line to illustrate this is 25...d3 26.♘d4 ♖e4 27.a4 ♔a8! 28.b5 ♕b6 29.♘xc6 ♕xf2+ 30.♖xf2 bxc6 31.bxc6, and the four-rook ending is equal.

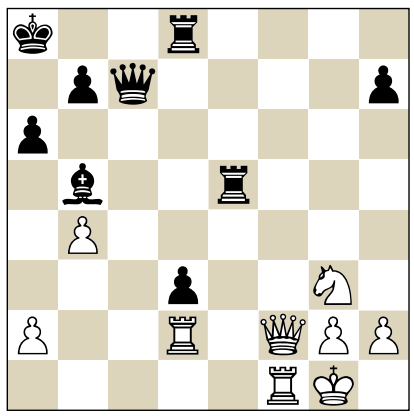
25...♖e4

Taking the initiative.

26.♕f2 d4

Stronger than capturing a pawn, since White would be able to block the d-pawn after 26...♖xb4 27.♘d4. Now it will become a dangerous passed pawn.

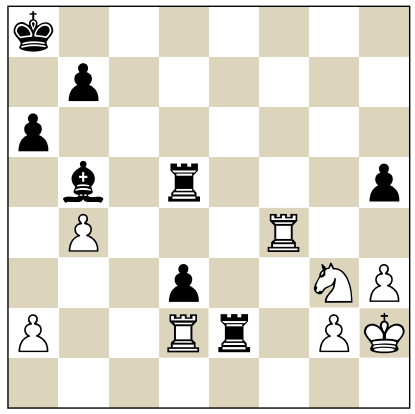
27.♘g3 ♖e7 28.♖cd1 d3 29.♖d2 ♔a8 30.♕c5 ♖e5 31.♕f2 ♗b5



Überdeckung of the passed pawn.

32.♕f4 ♕c3 33.h3 ♗c6 34.♔h2 ♖ed5 35.♖ff2 h5 36.♕h4 ♖e8

37.♕f4 ♗b5 38.♕h4 ♕c7 39.♕f4 ♕xf4 40.♖xf4 ♖e2



The time-control has been reached. The endgame is clearly better for Black, and Hou Yifan again showed her excellent technique.

This was Hou Yifan's sixth victory. In Round 8 she made a quick draw against Tatiana Kosintseva. During the press conference someone asked her if she was tired.

'No, I am not that tired', the Chinese girl told her questioner.

But towards the end of the tournament it did seem that she was running out of steam. She lost against Katerina Lahno, and this was a sign for her to take things a bit easier. Two solid final draws were sufficient for a clear-cut tournament victory, a full point ahead of Lahno. ■

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Garry Kasparov

Fix what is broken

It was with pleasure I received the news that Moscow would host the Anand-Gelfand match next year. The city that has seen more world championship matches than any other, twelve – reaching my favoured thirteen with the 1948 match tournament – has not seen a title clash since my second match with Karpov in 1985. A twenty-seven year drought is a long time for what was once the capital of world chess. In the interim, the sport's crown jewel has lost much of its luster under the management of Kirsan Ilyumzhinov.

How much of that corrosion came to pass was illustrated when the details of the bidding process came to light. Instead of sealed bids, Ilyumzhinov turned it into an ad hoc auction. According to the press, Moscow upped its bid to just over Chennai's exactly one minute before the deadline, snatching the world championship the way a buyer nabs a used radio on eBay. The circumstances make it hard not to assume insider trading, and the use of the Chennai bid to squeeze more money from Andrey Filatov, the backer of the Russian bid. As usual with Kirsan's dealings, such as the mysterious bids for Anand-Topalov from Turkey and Singapore, the details remain unknown. For example, it is still not clear to an outsider whether or not the announced sum of 2.55 million dollars includes FIDE's share or Russian taxes.

At least in Filatov we have a man of substance, as well as a personal friend of challenger Gelfand and a strong club player himself. He will prove himself even more worthy of admiration should he manage to stay far from the grasping hands of Ilyumzhinov and Russian Federation head Arkady Dvorkovich.

'Organizers are free to invite players who provide good value at the board. The amount of fight in a game of chess is determined not by the rulebook but by the amount of fight in the players.'

The last-minute result in favour of Russia, and the naming of the village of Skolkovo as the host site, should not surprise anyone who followed last year's FIDE campaign. Dvorkovich is also an aide to Russian president Dmitri Medvedev, and in that capacity was tasked with developing the so-called 'Skolkovo Innovation Center'. The reality of Skolkovo, located 2 kilometres from Moscow, is even worse than its stated goal of becoming a state-organized Silicon Valley. Like most government projects under Putin, its main purpose is to siphon money from the public coffers into the pockets of Putin's cronies.

Skolkovo is unlikely to be much good for chess and it surely won't cause Steve Jobs to lose any sleep, but as a method of putting public money into private hands it looks like an oligarch's dream. As posited by Russian political analyst Stanislav Belkovsky during last year's FIDE campaign, Dvorkovich and Ilyumzhinov's interests, that is, making money, combine nicely if they can bring FIDE and Skolkovo funds together, as now appears to be the plot. We can only hope that at the very least the absurdity will not be compounded by holding the match in the middle of nowhere instead of a proper venue in Moscow. Perhaps Kirsan's insistence on naming Skolkovo as the site is because there is no room for aliens to land near the Pushkin Museum in central Moscow?

Meanwhile, two of chess's young leading ladies, Hou Yifan and Humpy Koneru, representing the two most populous countries on earth, chess superpowers China and India, will play their November championship match in the poorest country in Europe. Albania is not the middle of nowhere – perhaps centre-right of nowhere – but it does bring to mind the Karpov campaign's slogan 'Put Chess Back on the Map.'

Power has shifted to Asia, but where are the events? Under Campomanes there were two Olympiads and a world championship match. Today we have an Indian world champion, a Chinese women's world champion, and a raft of high-level FIDE executives from all over Asia and the Middle East, a region that is also home to many of the world's most dynamic economies. And yet since 1992 no top FIDE events have been held further east than Elista, except for Kirsan's regular shows in Khanty-Mansiysk. A miserable failure of leadership.

Garry Kasparov

The 90% draw rate at this year's candidates event precipitated more of the usual 'draw death of chess' talk and the inevitable proposals of ways to change the rules of the game. One such suggestion, from Anand's second Rustam Kasimdzhanov, is to turn every game into a match of ever-decreasing time controls until a decisive result is reached. This is ironic since it is precisely Ilyumzhinov's beloved short matches that promote draws! Many players prefer to avoid the labours of classical chess and to take their chances in rapid play when they have the chance. Kasimdzhanov's plan also presupposes that draws are themselves a problem for the popularity of chess, as opposed to just short agreed draws.

It seems logical to assume that the ascendance of the scientific element in chess will make draws increasingly common at the highest level. Deep computer-aided preparation has leveled the opening playing field considerably and preparation now routinely reaches the endgame. Yet the computer era has yet to replicate the high drawing percentages of the 1970s and 1980s! A brief glance at the database shows the percentage of drawn games between players in the top fifty dropped substantially in the 1990s, from over sixty percent to the low fifties. The rate has been on the rise in the last decade, approaching sixty once more, though I take this as a shift in the attitudes of the players as much as anything else.

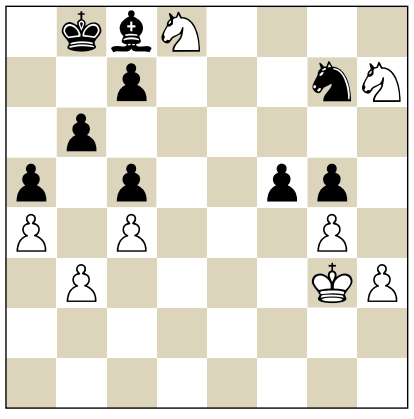
I spend precious few hours of my retirement from professional chess dreaming about facing the Petroff and the Berlin. The popularity of these defences and the relative decline of the Sicilian says a great deal about the state of the game today. Players are well able to avoid drawish lines and to play on in balanced positions. Organizers are free to invite players who provide good value at the board. The amount of fight in a game of chess is determined not by the rulebook but by the amount of fight in the players.

The players in Biel and Dortmund this year did not appear to be aware of the need to change the rules to avoid draws. Both events were full of fight and attractive chess, and for the most part you could tell this would be the case simply by looking at the list of invitees. Should Morozevich and Carlsen have been forced to play another game after their exciting draw in round three? Kramnik also showed he needs no cruel or unusual incentives to play fighting chess. He is taking more chances and pressing harder these days, as was well demonstrated by his second-round Dortmund win over Meier.

Nor is fighting chess a generational matter. Veterans (by modern standards!) like Bologan and Morozevich give no quarter while youth is no guarantee of combativeness. Contrast Radjabov and Nakamura, players of the same age and similar rating whose drawing percentages could not be more different. Over the past few years, Radjabov has drawn 73% of his classical games compared to Nakamura's 44%. Players are entitled to their own styles, naturally, but they should also accept personal responsibility before turning the sport into a circus with rule changes.

You cannot prevent a catenaccio style and general timidity from ruining some games. Football also suffers from the occasional 0-0 match with both sides playing only not to lose. Also as in football, some of the greatest chess contests end without a victor. The existence of draws in football has not harmed the sport's global popularity as far as I can tell. As for changing the scoring system, to three points for a win, for example, it might add some drama to the later rounds, but it is unlikely to lead to more decisive games. In 1980-1, the final year the English football league used the old two-point system, there were 118 draws in the First Division. The next year, with the new 3-1-0 system, there were 121!

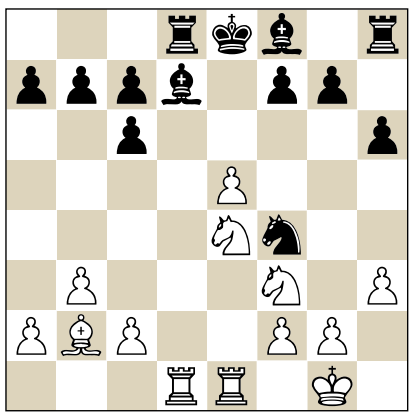
The draw death of chess looked very far away from Moscow. This year's Russian championship saw only 13 draws from 28 games and only one game was drawn in under thirty moves. From Morozevich and Grischuk we expect sharp battles, but it was Kramnik leading the way with 5 decisive games from 7! Unfortunately for him, two of those were early losses, including one in the first round to the eventual winner, Svidler. There were no Petroffs and only one Berlin, Kramnik's loss to Karjakin. That loss might have been avoided, but Kramnik missed two chances to play an equalizing knight sacrifice.



Karjakin-Kramnik
Moscow 2011 (3)
position after 39.♘h7

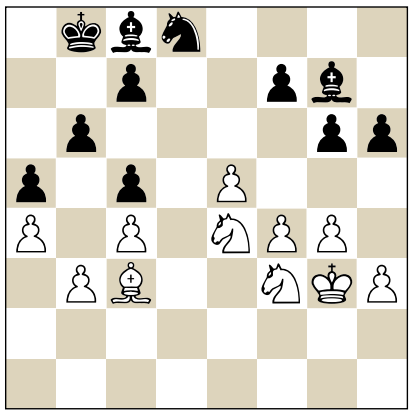
39...fxg4 40.hxg4 ♘f5+! 41.gxf5 ♗xf5 and the queenside pawns will soon be exchanged. The same trick was available two moves later.

It was only Kramnik's second classical loss with the Berlin, the first coming against me in Astana ten years ago. Apparently the key to victory is to make sure the e6 square is defended by knight, bishop, and pawn and only then play e6!



Kasparov-Kramnik
Astana 2001
position after 15...♘f4

16.e6!



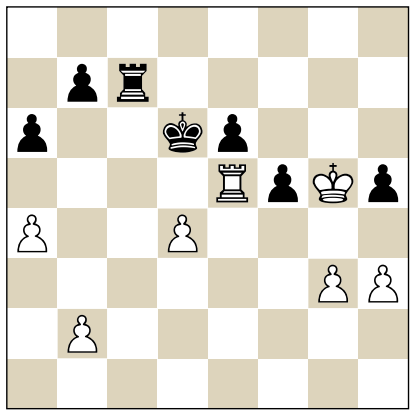
Karjakin-Kramnik
Moscow 2011 (3)
position after 29...♘xd8

30.e6

It worked for Karjakin as well, though in contrast with my game he had a better move available, 30.♘h4.

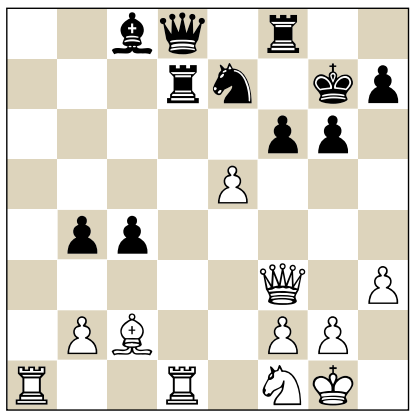
Karjakin has become something of a nemesis for Kramnik. In their last two classical encounters he has beaten Kramnik's Petroff and now his Berlin, a feat I can only envy. Nakamura and Kramnik have some even more unusual streaks in progress. Kramnik's loss to the American in the final round of Dortmund was his fourth consecutive loss to him with the white pieces, also a record that inspires my jealousy. And from their last eight games, including rapid and blitz and blindfold, White has scored half a point!

Svidler's remarkable sixth Russian title run could not be spoiled even with a loss in the final round to Morozevich, a belch at the end of a fine meal. The key moment came when the two were tied for the lead in the fifth round. Morozevich erred on the last move of the time control against Nepomniachtchi and quickly lost the endgame.



Nepomniachtchi-Morozevich
Moscow 2011 (5)
position after 40.Kg5

Instead of 40...♖c4, allowing 41.♔f6, 40...♖g7+ pushes the white king back, as after 41.♔xh5? ♖xg3 only Black has winning chances. At around the same moment, Timofeev missed the attractive shot



Timofeev-Svidler
Moscow 2011 (5)
position after 27...f6

28.♖a7! against Svidler, when White is winning after 28...b3 29.♖dxd7 ♗xd7 30.♗b1 with the threat of ♕b7. Or White could try the liquidating line 29.♗xb3!? cxb3 30.♖axd7 ♗xd7 31.♕b7 ♗c6 32.♖xd8 ♗xb7 33.♖d7 and White recovers the piece with a pawn to follow. Instead Timofeev went astray and Svidler quickly turned the tables to move into clear first.

Every player in the short event had at least one loss and only the overmatched Galkin and Timofeev were winless. Svidler has become a narrow specialist; he always plays the Grünfeld and always wins the Russian championship! He played without pressure, though it is peculiar to say that a five-time former champion was not among the favourites. His six titles match Tal's mark, and over a much shorter span than the six Soviet gold medals Tal captured from 1957 to 1978. Their sum is surpassed only by Botvinnik's seven, counting his 1941 Absolute Championship victory.

Speaking of the Patriarch, I'm writing this on August 17th, the 100th anniversary of his birth. Botvinnik's name is synonymous with classical chess. I disagreed with my teacher on many things, from politics at the end of the USSR to the potential of rapid games, which he saw as the beginning of chess's fall from grace.

Mikhail Moiseevich was a stern man with strong views and he considered it his duty to defend the integrity of our sport. We could certainly use more like him today. It's FIDE that is broken, not chess. ■

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Wang Hao

CURRENT ELO: 2718
DATE OF BIRTH: August 4, 1989
PLACE OF BIRTH: Harbin, China
PLACE OF RESIDENCE: Beijing, China

What is your favourite colour?
Crimson.

What kind of food makes you happy?
Japanese and Italian.

And what drink?
Lemon juice.

Who is your favourite author?
Haruki Murakami.

What was the best or most interesting book you ever read?
1q84 by Haruki Murakami.

What is your all-time favourite movie?
Leon: The Professional (1994) directed by Luc Besson.

What is your favourite TV series?
Sorry, I don't have one.

Do you have a favourite actor?
Will Smith.

And a favourite actress?
Megan Fox.

What music do you like to listen to?
Metal.

What do you see as your best result ever?
The best result on Board 1 at the recent World Teams Championship in Ningbo.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?
No, I don't think there is one.

What was the best game you ever played?
Shirov-Wang Hao, 2010 Tal Memorial, Moscow.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?
Vishy Anand. He is the best Asian player ever and I admire his calmness during the game.

What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw?
The third game of the World Championship match between Vladimir Kramnik and Vishy Anand in Bonn in 2008.

What is the best chess country in the world?
Armenia.

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?
Strategic games.

Do chess players have typical shortcomings?
I guess it's laziness.

What is it that you appreciate most in a person?
Patience.

What is it that you dislike in a person?
Dishonesty.

Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?
Yes, in fact I have. I usually keep putting on the same clothes after I have won a game.

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?
A mage, I guess.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?
Jean Reno, Kyōgoku Natsuhiko and Tuomas Holopainen.

Is there something you'd love to learn?
To play the piano.

What is your greatest fear?
Nothing.

What would you save from your house if it were on fire?
An interesting book.

If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?
I would certainly like to change the rating system. To my mind, for example the rating system of tennis is more attractive.

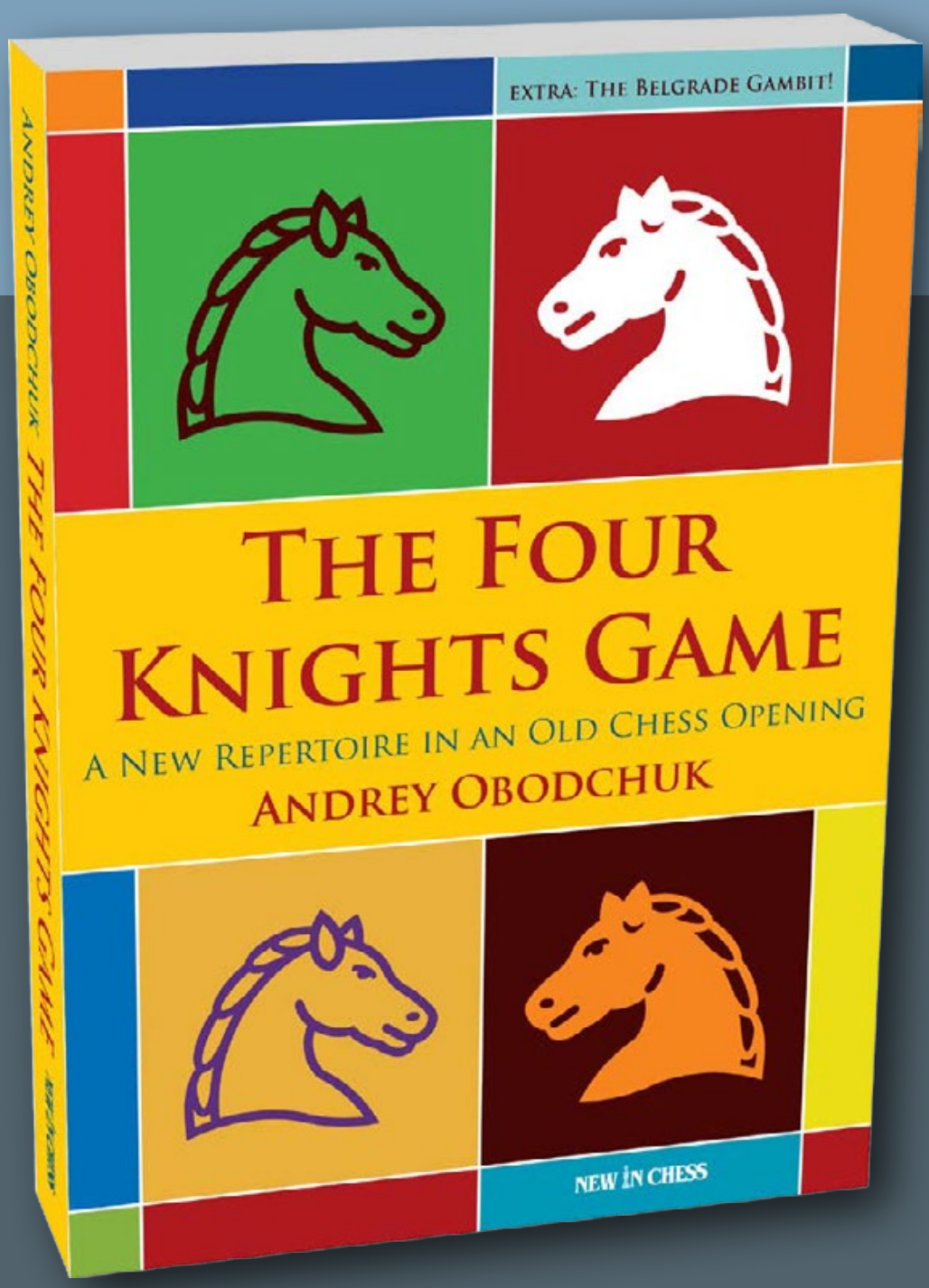
What is the stupidest rule in chess?
I am not in favour of the zero tolerance rule that was introduced by FIDE.

What will be the nationality of the 2050 chess world champion?
Dutch.

Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?
I have no idea ☺.

What is the best thing that was ever said about chess?
A good player is always lucky.

Destroys the passive reputation of a popular chess opening



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